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THE CAROLINAS SPEECH COMMUNICATION ANNUAL

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RHETORIC IN THE SECOND SOPHISTIC, MEDIEVAL, AND RENAISSANCE PERIODS: IMPLICATIONS FOR PEDAGOGY

Omar J. Swartz and Chris Bachelder

An important lesson for students of rhetorical theory and history is the idea that broad concepts such as truth, knowledge, rhetoric and persuasion are not stable, ahistorical, absolute entities; rather, these concepts are historically emergent and socially negotiated. One way that teachers of rhetoric can help students understand the dynamic, evolutionary trend of these umbrella terms is to focus attention on the historical fluctuation of the concept of *techne* in the art of persuasion. *Techne* is not a specific normative body of knowledge; rather, it is a power, a set of transferable, adaptable strategies of persuasion that are contingent upon context and are subject to revision and redefinition. Historically, theories of rhetorical *techne* are designed to demarcate a structure of human invention as an heuristic; *techne*, therefore, is associated with human agency and artistic endeavor, as opposed to necessity, force, and chance (Atwill 719). Contrary to the popular view of *techne* as the "mere" presentation of persuasive discourse, *techne* is best conceived of as generative and dynamic. By studying the *techne* in various historical contexts, students can gain insight into the relationship between effective persuasion and overarching views of knowledge, truth, and the nature and function of rhetoric.

This essay provides a limited overview of the flux of *techne* in rhetorical works of the Second Sophistic, Medieval, and Renaissance periods. In so doing, it offers a possible model for teachers of rhetoric who wish to emphasize the ways in which the act of persuasion has been conceived and reconceived throughout history. In particular, this essay explores the relative values of art, practice, imitation, and talent--four significant aspects of *techne*--in the educational development of the rhetor, as portrayed in each of these three major periods in rhetorical history.

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SECOND SOPHISTIC PERIOD

During the Second Sophistic, there are two major developments in rhetorical theory: the concern with and valorization of matters of style, and the integration of pagan rhetorical perspectives within the Christian church (see Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric* 37-40; Bizzell and Herzberg 34-36). Hermogenes (*On Ideas of Style*), Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*On Composition*) and Longinus (*On the Sublime*) exemplify the first development (Kennedy 112), while Saint Augustine exemplifies the second (Bizzell and Herzberg 383).

Style and Imitation

The texts that valorize style, such as those mentioned above, share three primary characteristics. First, style is addressed as the central concern of discourse. Second, the rhetor is instructed primarily in the analysis of a text, and thus hermeneutics is favored over invention. In other words, the *techne* offered by Second Sophistic authors deemphasizes strategies for constructing a text and instead emphasizes interpretation. Third, texts from this period place great value on imitation as a pedagogical methodology of advanced education. Hermogenes' *Progymnasmata* (*Elementary Exercises*) is illustrative of this genre that emphasizes the use of imitation in education.

In the typical Progymnasmata, students are instructed to study exemplary prose from the established literary canon and then to create their own composition or oratory based on these paradigmatic texts (Kennedy, *Greek Rhetoric* 54-70). On this point, however, the following distinctions must be made: *techne*, while often involving imitation, is not itself reducible to imitation, as delineated by the treatises of the Second Sophistic. On the contrary, during this period, imitation is treated as pedagogy, and thus distinct from *techne*. Imitation is an inartistic strategy (used to teach and learn rhetorical skills) that must be distinguished from *techne*, which is an heuristic. In short, *techne* is a distinct pedagogical methodology for constructing texts that is the core of rhetorical education during the Second Sophistic and subsequent periods. Practice, like imitation is yet another form of pedagogy that complements the study of *techne*. In general, rhetorical training in the Second Sophistic is characterized by these three modes of instruction (imitation, practice, and *techne*). In the Progymnasmata, practice is linked to imitation, rather than to invention, and both practice and imitation represent a less artistic form than *techne*.

This decline in rhetorical invention parallels the decline in civic and philosophical rhetoric in the Roman republic, in which politically motivated rhetoric was subject to Imperial censorship (Bizzell and Herzberg 33-34). As Bizzell and Herzberg write,

> Participants in the Second Sophistic shared with the earliest Greek Sophists an interest in etymologies, grammar, and the power of stylistic variety and abundance, with the striking difference that the Second Sophists could have none of their predecessors' pretensions of using this knowledge in the service of important social and political ends (34).

However, with the rise of Christianity, *techne* is embraced by Christian rhetoricians, and it is used in the service of the church. A tension thus arises between Christianity and classical concepts of rhetoric" (see Murphy, "Saint Augustine").

Christianity and Rhetoric

The second major development during the Second Sophistic is the adoption and revision of Classical pagan rhetorics by Christian rhetoricians. As the Roman Empire declined in power and influence, Christianity began to spread and to exert considerable social and cultural influence (Bizzell and Herzberg 367-68). With Christianity came the predominant faith in a divine Truth controlling human destiny, and this faith left little room for the tenet of probability, a crucial aspect of traditional rhetoric. As James J. Murphy asserts, in "Saint Augustine and the Christianization of Rhetoric," a tension thus emerges between the Christian belief in transcendent truth and the classical systems of rhetorical invention.

James Kinneavy explores this tension and documents the interaction between a priori truth and rhetorical probability. As Kinneavy explains, in *Greek Rhetorical Origins of Christian Faith*, the central concept of Christianity, "faith," is related to the Greek term "*pistis*," which means persuasion or probability. *Pistis* is first given tecnical treatment in Aristotle's *Tekhne rhetorike* (*On Rhetoric*), in which it denoted "the means of persuasion." For Aristotle, there are two means of persuasion, artistic (entechnic) and nonartistic (atechnic) (37-47; 108-18). Kinneavy explains that, for Aristotle, the ethical *pistis*, pathetic *pistis*, and logical *pistis* are the elements of communicative interaction; further, Kinneavy discovers a "common semantic base" between the two kinds of Aristotelian *pistis* and Christianity. As he explains:

> One prima facie bit of evidence that suggests a semantic similarity between the notion of faith and the notion of persuasion is the common etymological origin of the two terms in Greek. The verb for "to believe" in Greek is *pisteuein* . . . . The usual verb for "to persuade" in Greek is *peithein*. Etymologically, *pisteuein* derives from an early form of the root of the verb *peithein* . . . . In other words, in historical Greek "to believe" was semantically related to "to persuade." (48)

Specifically, when the "Word of God" is viewed as a verbal message conveyed to assenting human beings, Kinneavy argues that, "in faith," a Christian auditor is "persuaded" to accept a Christian epistemology. The word "faith," therefore, carries with it connotations of probability. In order to explain this connection, Kinneavy hypothesizes that the cultural connection between the Christian concept of "faith" and the pagan concept of *pistis* must have been carried out in the *epheba* and the *gymnasium*, Greek educational systems that included rhetorical instruction (73-80).

Such connections between pagan rhetorical culture and Christian Platonic culture contributed to the debate among educated Christians in Rome about whether or not to accept pagan rhetorical theory (see Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, chapter two). Simply stated, the classical (pagan) formulation of *techne* and practice tends to emphasize human agency in inventing arguments and persuading others. This is clearly illustrated in Isocrates' *Antidosis*:

> . . . because there has been implanted in us the power to persuade each other and to make clear to each other whatever we desire, not only have we escaped the life of wild beasts, but we have come together and founded cities and made laws and invented arts; and, generally speaking, there is no institution devised by man which the power of speech has not helped us to establish . . . . With this faculty we both contend against others on matters which are open to dispute and seek light for ourselves on things which are unknown . . . . (50)

In contrast, when rhetorical aptitude is conceived to be derived from imitation and talent, rather than human rhetorical invention, the art of persuasion appears divine in origin, and thus consistent with Christian faith. The Christian position, briefly stated, is that God grants the skill of oratory through inspiration and the gift of talent, and that the Christian rhetor can achieve eloquence by studying and imitating the Bible. For Christian orators and rhetoricians, a key issue involves the acquisition or origin of eloquence: is eloquence of divine origin or can it be learned for the practice of preaching and the cultivation of human souls? Furthermore, can the art of rhetoric be utilized for preaching? Does such an art falsify or deny God, or can it help communicate and disseminate God's message? For answers to these questions, it is important to turn to Augustine.

Augustine and the Christian Rhetor

Augustine gives considerable attention to the relationship between art, practice, imitation, and talent, and he explicitly treats the subject of instruction in his work. In the prologue of *De doctrinia Christiana* (*On Christian Doctrine*), for example, Augustine acknowledges a role for *techne* in Christian discourse. He explains, "There are certain precepts for treating the scriptures which I think may not be inconveniently transmitted to students, so that they may profit not only from reading the work of expositors but also in their own explanations of the sacred writings to others" (3). Thus, in his treatise, Augustine concerns himself primarily with the principles of interpretation. He also recognizes that there is a rule-governed art of rhetoric, though he initially refuses to delineate these rules and implicitly directs the reader to Cicero. However, by the fourth book of *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine alters his position and provides an explicitly Christian treatment of rhetoric (see Bizzell and Herzberg 382-85).

Augustine's basic perspective, advanced in *On Christian Doctrine*, is that orators and preachers can successfully accomplish their work without rhetorical training and can rely instead on divine inspiration, especially if they clearly communicate God's word. He writes, "The speaker should not consider the eloquence of his teaching but the clarity of it" (133). In fact, Augustine prefers this reliance on providence to rigid adherence to classical rules of oratory and eloquence. In *Book IV*, he writes, "For a man speaks more or less wisely to the extent that he has become more or less proficient in the Holy Scriptures" (122). However, Augustine does not completely reject rhetoric; he recognizes that *techne*, the art or principles of rhetoric, can help the orator/preacher to be more successful in the salvation of souls: "While the faculty of eloquence, which is of great value in urging either evil or justice, is in itself indifferent, why should it not be obtained for the uses of the good in the service of truth . . .? (118-19). He argues that while Truth exists beyond the realm of *techne*, and that people can worship and communicate God's will without *techne*, human beings are in fact dependent upon language and that "they have learned at least the alphabet from men" (4).

In the prologue to *On Christian Doctrine*, Augustine anticipates later arguments that defend rhetoric, as well as those that express reservations about a Christian rhetoric. He argues that *techne* is useful to the Christian orator, but only in the service of divine inspiration. For instance, *techne* is, for Augustine, a hermeneutical tool used both to understand the lessons of the Bible and to communicate that understanding clearly to an audience. Similar to other rhetoricians in the Second Sophistic, Augustine conceives of *techne* as a set of critical interpretive strategies used to examine existing texts (particularly the Bible), rather than as a set of artistic strategies used to generate discourse. The Aristotelian topics, for example, become hermeneutical devices for Augustine--he conceives of them as tools used to mine the scriptures for material to be used in a sermon. Rhetorical education, then becomes interpretive. Eloquence is based less on art and practice, and more on imitation of the Bible and development of one's divinely inspired talents.

While the brief discussion of the Second Sophistic offered here is inevitably limited and over simplistic, it is important to note that Augustine's conception of *techne*, and of rhetoric in general, was extremely influential in the transition between the classical period and the Middle Ages. As Murphy writes in *A Synoptic History of Classical Rhetoric*, "Saint Augustine is sometimes called 'the last classical man and the first medieval man.'" With respect to rhetoric this is certainly true, and it is possible to see in him an agent of communication from one age to another" (183). Thus, in focusing on the historical, dynamic fluctuation of *techne* and rhetoric, teachers might ask students to explore the ways in which Augustine's work is a bridge between eras and between different conceptualizations of rhetoric. The essay now crosses that bridge into the Medieval period.

MEDIEVAL PERIOD

In the Middle Ages, after the wane of Roman cultural and political power, the practice of rhetoric is partitioned into three separate arts, each with its own distinct *techne* but united by the overarching epistemology of the Christian world view. The first is the art of preaching, the *ars praedicandi*. According to Murphy, in *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, the art of preaching involves three phases. In phase one, the scripture is developed as "apodeictic proof." "Apodeictic" is a word borrowed from Aristotle's *Topics* that means certain Truth, as opposed to nonapodeictic proof--a proof based on probable arguments (Murphy 276). Phase two in the development of the *ars praedicandi* involves the central principles found in Augustine's *De doctrina Christiana*, as well as in the work of Pope Gregory the Great (*Cura pastoralis* or *Pastoral Care*). "For Augustine," Murphy writes, "every *thing* in the universe is in itself a *sign* of something else which God intends an individual to understand" (287). As a result, the orator's main concern is to elucidate these connections, which are often obscured due to human fallibility. Augustine writes, "This eloquence is that to be used in teaching, not that the listener may be pleased by what has horrified him, nor that he may be do what he has hesitated to do, but that he may be aware of that which lay hidden" (135). Pope Gregory agrees that the primary purpose of Christian rhetoric is to "bring the holy church before the rude minds of unbelievers by means of good teachers" (quoted in Murphy, *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages* 293). In this phase of rhetoric, the purpose of the speaker is to adapt the absolute truth of the scriptures to a particular audience, and then to manifest the self-evident truths more clearly in the minds of the corrupt auditors. The third phase of the art of preaching involves the establishment of the sermon as a clearly defined genre that includes strategies of invention, organization, logic, and psychology (Murphy 310). At this time, theories of the sermon are developed, thus blurring somewhat the distinction between art, practice, imitation, and talent as these are all incorporated into the *ars praedicandi* (see Murphy, chapter six).

One point must be made clear: theory, according to Medieval rhetorical training, follows from articulated practice. Phase one in the development of the *ars praedicandi* involves no discussion of content. However, by the third phase, there is established a clearly defined art of preaching, designed to transmit the Truth as it is found in the Bible. In other words, preaching does not add to or create knowledge, and the initiation of discourse is dependent upon the constraints of the rhetorical situation and the orator's interpretive stance with regard to the Holy Scriptures. This is best illustrated in Alain de Lille's *Art of Preaching*. Here, preaching is defined as an "open and public instruction regarding behavior and proposed for the formation of man, rooted in reasoning and growing from the spring of the sacred text."

As scripture is apodeictic proof, the art of rhetoric involves merely the transmission of that truth. For Alain de Lille, discourse begins with the divine gift of God's word. Robert Basevorn's *Forma Praedicandi* (*The Form of Preaching*) is another example of this theory of rhetorical practice. What this means, in effect, is that art, practice, imitation, and talent are dependent upon God's grace and the ability of the orators to let themselves be filled with God's wisdom. The orator should, in Augustine's words, "Pray that God place a good speech in his mouth" (168). However, because humans invented the alphabet, and because humans are fallible and perhaps unclear about God's intention, there is a place for the rhetorical arts in the education of the orator. For Augustine, the function rhetoric serves in the Christian order is to help the audience to be receptive to the sermon and thus easily moved by God's commandments.

The second art of rhetoric in the Medieval period is the *ars grammatica*, which is divided into several arts, one of which is the *ars poetriae*, or art of poetry. In Medieval texts such as Geoffrey of Vinsauf's *Poetria Nova*, poetry is treated as rhetorical discourse that is the result of human agency, an art of human experience. Geoffrey offers the following explanation of *techne*: "Three things perfect the poem: art, by whose rule you should be governed; practice, which you should cultivate; and your betters whom you should imitate. Art makes artists sure, practice makes them quick, and imitation makes them tasteful" (94). Geoffrey's description of *techne* is similar to the descriptions formulated by the classical rhetoricians of the Greek and Roman periods. When the political environment thwarted traditional deliberative and forensic rhetoric, the art of poetry provided Medieval writers with a form of discourse beyond the sermon. As Paul Prill (1987) argues, poetry in the Middle Ages is heavily influenced and shaped by rhetorical theory; he explains that many of the theorists of the Middle Ages transform the art of rhetoric into the art of poetry. Furthermore, William Purcell (1987) concurs that traditional rhetorical precepts are applied to the creation of Medieval poetry. He explores *stasis* and the doctrine of figures from the *Rhetorica ad Herennium*, and traces its treatment in the arts of poetry. Majory Woods (1991) also finds a combination of theoretical and literary emphasis in the *ars poetria*, and argues that this critical/literary focus anticipates the intellectual position of literary studies in the modern academy. As the work of these contemporary scholars suggests, there was not in the Middle Ages, as there tends to be in the twentieth century, a rigid poetic/rhetorical binary. Thus, students of rhetoric have further evidence that the category of rhetoric is fluid, not fixed, and that claims of ahistorical rhetorical norms are themselves rhetorical.

The third Medieval rhetorical art is the art of letter writing, the ars dictaminis. According to Murphy, in his chapter on the art of letter writing in *Rhetoric in the Middle Ages*, the *ars dictaminis* is uniquely a Medieval invention, which makes a sharp break from traditional rhetorical practice as found in Greece and Rome. Murphy points out that communication was primarily oral in the ancient world. This was the result, in part, of the lack of writing tools, as well as of the ancients' mistrust of writing, inspired in part by Plato's *Phaedrus*. By the ninth century, the art of letter writing became more common and letters came to be regarded as a branch of literature. By the year 1000, the educational level of Europe was at its lowest and powerful people were illiterate. Thus, the court letter-writer was an important figure in political communication. In addition, as civilization became more complex, creating further opportunities for communication and business, formulae books began to appear and letters took the form of legal documents (Murphy 194-268).

Initially, the *ars dictaminis* was governed strictly by formal requirements; letter writers simply transcribed letters that were collected in books. As formulae books became too constricting, a theory of letter writing was developed that allowed writers to adapt to various situations. The father of this art is considered to be Alberic of Monte Cassino. Alberic developed his theory in two books, *Dictaminum Radii* and *Breviarium de Dicamine*, which put forth two main principles: first, that it is apporpriate to apply rhetorical principles in writing, as well as in speaking, and second, that Cicero's parts of arrangement of a speech could be used to guide the letter writing process. However, as Murphy notes, an argument raged throughout the Medieval period regarding the importance of formalism and invention. The question revolved around the issue of whether the letter is a document bound by rules (*carta*) or a free statement made by an individual (*oratio*).

Regarding all three Medieval rhetorical arts, it is important to realize that in the Middle Ages, philosophy was the primary subject of higher education, and literature was studied as a branch of grammar (Morgan 434). The study of rhetoric became the study of how to construct poetry. Here, invention becomes product-oriented, and it consists of a repertoire of figures. Students should realize that rhetoric can be conceptualized both as an end (or product), as well as a process; this latter perspective underlies contemporary instruction in rhetoric and composition in most English departments in American universities. As we move to the Renaissance, we see that the merging of poetry and rhetoric is reversed, and rhetoric becomes once again distinct from poetics.

RENAISSANCE PERIOD

By the Renaissance, the practice of rhetorical *techne* is reversed; there is a move toward classical rhetorical theory and toward a secularization of culture and rhetorical skills. The development of rhetorical theory in this period can be illustrated by the work of Thomas Wilson and Peter Ramus.

In the opening paragraph of his *Arte of Rhetorike*, Wilson argues that rhetoric is based on artificial method. He explains, "Rhetoric is an art to set forth by utterance of words the matter at hand as it is learned, or rather an artificial declaration of the mind . . ." (1). Wilson asserts that the orator must be trained, and that this training should involve a combination of art, skill, and practice. He explains, "For though we have a wit and learning together, yet shall they both be of little avail without much practice" (4). Wilson makes this point repeatedly: "What makes the lawyer to have such utterance? Practice. What makes the preacher to speak to roundly? Practice" (4). Again, he expounds, "Many practice I warrant you. Therefore, in all faculties, diligent practice and earnest exercise are the only things that make men's prose excellent" (4). Thereafter, Wilson explains how eloquence influences art: "The art, rather, was gathered upon eloquence" (5). In other words, the principles of art are extracted and deduced from the work of those who are naturally eloquent. In this way, Wilson argues, art can be improved through practice and study, and thus art becomes an equalizer. One way to recognize this is through writing (5).

In his *Art of Logic*, Peter Ramus provides a logical, rather than rhetorical, treatise on discourse. Invention, completely stripped from rhetoric, becomes a part of logic. Rhetoric is reduced to style with a heavy emphasis on imitation. The traditional arts of rhetorical invention, such as *statis* and *topoi*, are no longer deemed relevant to rhetoric as an intellectual activity. For Ramus, pedagogy involves modeling and text. Ramus' meanings shift as art is contrasted with science; thus students can find in Ramus an early example of a binary relationship established between the humanities and the sciences. Ramus declares that "method" and "form" can be applied to all the arts and sciences, and that they can be taught and learned. However, there are general rules for composing an art: justice, the necessity for keeping to one's own domain; virtue, the necessity for upholding Truth; and wisdom, the necessity for maintaining relevance in discussion (4-5).

Walter Ong (1958) elaborates on these ideas in discussing Ramus' classroom practice. According to Ong, Ramus' practice involved an hour of lecture, meditation on the lecture, study, and exercise based on this material. Exercise involved an analysis of the text and then a composition that was an imitation of the text. This methodology applies to any subject matter. Ramus has only one art of discourse, logic, and this grounds everything from scientific discourse to poetry. Furthermore, Ramus introduces a basic epistemological shift from aural to visual instruction with the use of grafts and charts. Wilbur Samuel Howell notes that such distinctions between art, practice, imitation, and talent involve the shift in logic from the communicative arts to the scientific method and the rejection of rhetoric in favor of logic. This shift might be seen as an early manifestation of the sharp distinction that arose in the twentieth century between social scientific and humanistic paradigms of communication.

CONCLUSION

As this limited study illustrates, rhetoric is not a stable category that transcends the historical, the cultural, or the political. Rather, rhetoric, and more specifically, *techne*, is a dynamic concept that is constantly revised and reconceptualized in light of larger historical forces. This is not to say that we can safely pin down the trajectory of rhetorical theory or neatly summarize its historical "progress" toward some predetermined telos. In fact, the purpose of this essay has not been so much to synthesize numerous centuries and scholars into a seamless narrative, but rather to suggest that the study of rhetoric and rhetorical history resists attempts to settle the matter once and for all. We have attempted to show here that *techne* is a fluid and malleable set of strategies, and that it is significantly influenced by historical and political contexts. By focusing attention on the dynamism of *techne*, teachers can help students of rhetoric appreciate the lessons of James Berlin's *Rhetoric and Reality*. As Berlin explains: "While one particular rhetorical theory may predominate at any historical moment, none remains dominant over time. Each major system is destined to be replaced eventually. Thus, we ought not to talk about *rhetoric* but, as Paolo Velesio has recently suggested, of *rhetorics*, seeing the field as providing a variety equal to that of poetic" (3).

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THOU ART DAMNED: CURSING AS A RHETORICAL STRATEGY OF THE ACCUSERS IN THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

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Although the definition of witchcraft--"familiarity with the Devil"--made no distinction as to gender, of those accused of witchcraft in seventeenth-century New England, females outnumbered males four to one. The ratio was only slightly higher in Salem, Massachusetts, where 38 men and 103 women were cursed as witches. Yet when cursed as witches, men were usually accused together with women such as wives and sisters and so were implicated through a literal process of guilt by association (Demos, 1982).

Identifying it as the "trap set for women throughout history," Jamieson (1995, p. 3) references the no-win situation in which prosecutors placed women accused of witchcraft.The suspected witch was submerged in a pond. If she drowned, she deserved to; if she didn't she was a witch. In the first case, God was revealing her nature; in the second, the devil.

This essay argues that the prosecution literally and rhetorically forced those accused of witchcraft into paradoxical situations from which there was no escape. It begins with an examination of cursing as a rhetorical strategy. A brief look at some of the historical and sociological components of witchcraft is then presented, followed by an examination of the cursing rhetoric employed by accusers during the Salem, Massachusetts witchcraft trials of 1692.The essay concludes with discussion regarding the success of cursing in Puritan America as well as speculation regarding the status of this particular rhetorical strategy in contemporary America.

CURSING AS RHETORICAL TECHNIQUE

Cursing, as it is used here, does not refer to the use of "profane" or "obscene language." It is not the use of "bad language" that discredits the ethos of its user. Rather, cursing is a rhetorical strategy of control used by members of a dominant group to condemn those who might challenge the legitimacy of that group's ideology. It is the use of negative terms to label anyone who challenges the "status quo" of a dominant group.

Reverend Tom Davis (1994) argues that while a religious ideology is capable of inspiring people to care for and sustain one another, it may also teach them to hate one another. In this latter negative aspect, religion sometimes achieves its purpose by a speech process called "cursing." When rhetors engage in cursing, they devalue the people that they are attacking by labelling them in a pejorative manner. The goal of such rhetors is to ensure that the "cursed" group--usually one that has in some way challenged a dominant ideology--is shunned by other groups. In so doing, the message of the "scorned" group is also silenced. Ultimately, the target of cursing, be it a group or an individual, is perceived as dangerous and/or evil (Davis, 1994).

WITCHCRAFT IN NEW ENGLAND

From 1450 to 1750, 100,000 people, most of them women, were tried for the crime of witchcraft. About half of these persons were executed, usually by burning (Levack, 1987). Witch-hunts involved the identification of individuals who performed black, maleficent and magic and who made a pact with the Devil and paid some sort of homage to him. The belief that witches were Devil-worshippers made convicted witches felons and heretics who chose to serve the Devil rather than God. Witches were thus seen as not only harming their neighbors by magic but, more significantly, completely rejecting their Christian faith thereby undermining Christian civilization (Levack, 1987).

The belief in witchcraft was practically universal in the seventeenth century, even among the educated. Furthermore, the positions of seventeenth-century believers in witchcraft were logically and theologically stronger than arguments against witchcraft (Kittredge, 1929). The witch-hunters in Salem, Massachusetts, during 1692, were acting according to the universal belief of their day. The Bible was perceived as absolutely true in every detail, as inspired by the Holy Ghost, as a complete rule of faith and practice. It provided authority for belief in witchcraft, a crime recognized by all branches of the Church, by philosophy, by science, by medicine, and by law. The intensity of Puritanism as an organized religious experience was a major factor in the Salem witch trials. Demos (1982) notes the Puritans saw themselves as participants in a cosmic struggle between God and Satan for control of the universe. Life was full of terrifying, devil-induced events. As a result, clergy emphasized, in sermon and writing, the dangers posed by Satan's "incarnate legions" and witches were major players in Satan's plot against God and God-fearing people. In Salem, Massachusetts, minister Samuel Parris prepared his congregation for witch-hunting by depicting a Satanic menace both outside and inside the village for years before the hunt (Levack, 1987).

Interest in books about prophecy and fortune telling ran high in New England in the winter of 1691-92, especially among young people. Small, informal circles of adolescents, mostly girls, were preoccupied that winter with "little sorceries" based on occult experiments. There were eight young women in the group: Abigail Williams, eleven, Mary Walcut, seventeen; Ann Putnam, twelve; Mercy Lewis, seventeen; Mary Warren, twenty; Elizabeth Booth, eighteen, Sarah Churchill, twenty; and Suzannah Sheldon (Drake, 1869). One such circle centered in the household of the Rev. Samuel Parris of Salem Village. As these girls pursued their "projects," they became frightened and soon began expressing their fears in bizarre ways, climbing over furniture, getting into odd postures and uttering unintelligible speech (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977).The village physician diagnosed "malevolent witchcraft" as the cause of the young women's behavior.

Once persuaded that the strange behavior of his daughter and friends originated in witchcraft, Parris and others urged them to name their tormenters. Eventually, the adolescents named three women believe they found "personally frightening" (Boyer & Nissenbaum 1977). The women accused of witchcraft were women were Sarah Good, a beggar, notorious through the Village for her temper and tongue; Sarah Osborne, an elderly woman with a reputation for immorality, and the Parris' slave, Tituba. During the next year, 162 individuals were accused of witchcraft; seventy-six were tried; thirty were convicted (Levack, 1987); twenty died, and two died in jail (Kittredge, 1929).

Spectral Evidence as Cursing

The form of evidence that constituted the bulk of the 1692 testimony was "spectral," the accuser's contention that the accused came to her/him as a specter to utter obscenities, bite and torment. It is the testimony that recurs again and again, in essentially every case, and which the group of "possessed" girls supplied (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977). The young women's testimony--their cursing--was taken as *prima facie* evidence that the person whose specter or image had tortured them was a witch because God would never permit Satan to use the image of an innocent person.

While the ministers concluded that the devil could, on occasion, assume the shape of an innocent person, this point was never discussed in depth. Those accused of witchcraft were brought face-to-face with their accusers, who then would fall writing to the floor, tormented by unseen hands. The alleged victims testified to being pinched, scratched, hurt by specters of the accused, visible only to the victims themselves. The eight persons hanged on September 22, 1692 were cursed the "Firebrands of Hell" by the Rev. Nicholas Noyes as the executions were carried out (Drake, 1869, p. 198).

The Cursing of "Old" Women

The long-standing policy of the Catholic church that witchcraft did not exist was reversed at the end of the fifteenth century when the *Hammer of Witches* or *Malleus Maleficarum* was written in 1486 as a handbook for inquisitors which insisted that witches were primarily women (Hunter College Women's Studies Collective, 1983). Accused witches throughout history and pan-culturally seem to have been the same sort of women: old, deprived of the protection of husbands or sons, living on the risky margins of society. They were women who irritated and angered others with efforts to gain assistance (Hunter College Women's Studies Collective, 1983).

The largest group of accused witches in the seventeenth century was "menopausal women." Childbearing was assumed to be "God-given" and shaped the definition of womanhood in Puritan America. Demos (1982) believes menopause was thus very likely a source of "profound loss" which caused women at midlife, as well as others, to cast themselves as victims--and to be cast and cursed as witches.

"Midlife crossover," a tendency in men and women as they grow older to reverse, or at least to diminish, their conventional sex roles, may have also attributed to older women being targeted as witches. Post-menopausal seventeenth-century women may have moved toward increasing autonomy and self-assertion, attributes New England norms allowed only for men. And those accused of witchcraft may have been the more outspoken of that group.

Older women were the most frequent targets of witch-hunts because witches were generally prosecuted after suspicion of them had mounted over the years. Since the key element in male or female midlife was the "exercise of power"--the use of a "fully developed capacity"-- middle age also threatened a time when one would best be able to misuse power (Demos, 1982). Although this "power pattern" most likely related to men, Demos (1982) believes seventeenth-century New England women also might have experienced a peak in their power capabilities in mid-life. For example, she was likely to have many children in her care and under her authority. Additional dependents--servants, apprentices, foster children--might have expanded the 40 to 60 year old woman's "power." Midlife was associated, in theory and in fact, with power over others. Witchcraft was a special and deadly instance of power over others; therefore, most accused witches were persons in midlife (Demos, 1982). Women charged as witches were often wise women and folk healers, persons who were old by right of their vocations.

Furthermore, older people, especially if they were senile, often displayed behavior considered eccentric or anti-social which made neighbors uncomfortable and invited accusations of witchcraft. Such an older person would generally also be more likely to confess to consorting with the devil as a result of her senility. Older women were also less physically powerful than younger ones and more likely to resort to sorcery as an attempt at protection or revenge. Levack (1987) argues older women were forced to rely upon the tenuous authority they had acquired because of their longevity or the superstition that they controlled the occult.

Because women were considered driven by sexual desire regardless of age, older and lust-driven women also prompted a fear in men of the sexually experienced, sexually independent women. Thus the "old witch," especially the old widow, became the primary object of male sexual fear, male hostility, and male accusations of witchcraft. The cursing of such women as witches also made sense since the devil, known for his sexual prowess, was thought to appear to prospective witches in the form of an attractive young man and make sexual advances to them. Since older women were thought to be lust driven and yet unable to find sexual partners, they were ideal prey for Satan.

Sarah Good, "poor and friendless, and of general bad repute," Susanna Martin, a woman "prone to wordy Contests, by which she had excited the jealousy of envious Neighbours" with "a Mind far superior to that of the Court;" and Rebecca Nurse, a "Lady of great Worth, but aged and in poor Health" were hanged together on July 19, 1692 in Salem, Massachusetts (Drake, 1869, pp. 196-197). Good and another accused at Salem, Sarah Osburn, were described as "two old women of dubious reputation" (Hansen, 1969, p. 32) while Cotton Mather referred to one convicted witch as "this rampant hag" and argued the events at Salem were part of a plot against the country by a "terrible plague of Evil Angels" (Hansen, 1969, p. 171).

Cursing a "Witch" for Moral Deviance

Women cursed as witches also often had reputations for religious and moral deviance prior to their being charged. Many had been suspected of and even prosecuted for other morally suspect behaviors such as non-attendance at church, Sabbath-breaking, use of obscene language, fornication, prostitution, abortion and adultery. In particular, women who were suspected of religious non-conformity or who had no religion at all were vulnerable to charges of witchcraft (Levack, 1987).

Some women threatened the sexual order, subverted the "order of Creation" (Karlsen, 1989) by being assertive; speaking up for their rights or being too successful in their domestic work. Still others were threats because they asserted independence by running taverns or boardinghouses. Others who practiced healing or midwifery were transmogrified into witches when the childbirth or healing was unsuccessful.

According to MacFarlane (1970), literary accounts of witches written in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries often stress the suspect's ugliness and described the personality of accused witches in the following terms: *boastful, illiterate, miserable, lustful, lewd,* and *melancholy*.

The first witchcraft execution in the Massachusetts Bay Colony took place in 1648 when Margaret Jones was hanged "as much for her good Offices, as for the evil influences imputed to her" (Drake, 1869, p. 58). She had been, "Like many other Mothers among the early Settlers," a "physician," but after being accused of witchcraft "was found to have such a milignant Touch, as many Persons were taken with Deafness, or Vomiting, or other violent Pains and Sickness "(p. 59). Furthermore "her Behavior at her Trial was intemporate, lying notoriously, and railing upon the Jury and Witnesses" (p. 59).

Accused witches also often had marriages marred by trouble and conflict. One woman was charged for "railing" at her husband and calling him "gurly-gutted Devil;" another, along with her husband, was tried, convicted and punished for "fighting with each other" (Demos, 1982, p. 74). Conflict between parents and children also prompted charges of witchcraft.

Sarah Good Cursed as a Witch

Women cursed as witches in Salem during 1692 included Sarah Good, a "hard-bitten, slatternly English woman eking out the roughest kind of peasant life" (Hall, 1988, p. 256). According to Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977), many of the accused witches in 1692 Salem--poor and defenseless women like Sarah Good--fit the standard pattern of European witchcraft prosecutions where "witches" were the impoverished victims of economic change.

Married to a landless laborer, Good was seen as a "powerful hag" with "matted hair" and a "face so seamed and leathery" that she was thought to be at least seventy, she was much younger and in fact pregnant at the time of her imprisonment. At one time accused of spreading small pox, people were reluctant to have her in their homes because she was "shrewish, idle and slovenly." At the time of her trial, the pipe smoking Sarah was considered a beggar. There was generally little compassion for her--or any outcast--in Puritan society as it was believed that God usually inflicted poverty or other afflictions with some just cause (Starkey, 1950).

Boyer and Nissenbaum (1974) contend that what disturbed people most about Sarah Good was not that she begged, but that she seemed "sullen and ungrateful" as she went about begging. She had a reputation for acting with hostility and was "so turbulent a spirit, spiteful and maliciously bent" that she was turned away from homes of even those rare Salem Villagers who thought to offer Sarah and her husband William charity (p. 205).

On March 1, 1692, the "afflicted girls" were seated together at the front of a meetinghouse. The accused women were brought in one by one for questioning. As each of the three came into view, the girls began to exhibit horrifying signs of physical suffering. When Sarah Good was brought in, the young women were "all dreadfully tortured and tormented" (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1974, p. 8). Although the accused was kept far from them, they insisted it was Sarah Good who was tormenting them.

Ezekiel Chevers was present at Sarah Good's trial and reported that when "the children" who had cursed Goody Good as a witch were told to "look upon her" in the courtroom to verify she was the person that "had hurt them," they all "did look upon her and said this was one of the persons that did torment them" and then "presently they were all tormented" (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, p. 356). Chevers reported:

> her answers were in a very wicked, spitfull manner reflecting and retorting agnst the authority with base and abusive words and many lies shee was taken in (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, p.347). Samuel and Mary Abbey testified that although they had allowed Sarah and her husband to live in their house "out of Charity, they being Poor," they were force" (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, pp. 367-368).

Seventeen year old Elizabeth Hubbard testified that she had seen "the Apperistion of Sarah Good who did most greviously afflect me by pinching and pricking me" and that the torture from Goody good continued after she was brought to trial.

Eighteen year old Susannah Shelden testified that Sarah Good (in specter form) "dredfully afflected me by . . . almost choaking me to death" (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1973, p. 374). At one point the shape of Goody Good tied the young woman so securely that the bands had to be cut for removal.

Another young "victim" cursed the old woman not only as a witch, but as a practitioner of infanticide when she said that the apparition of Sarah had appeared with her "least Child" who did tell its mother that she did muder it: to which Sarah good replyed that she did it because that she Could not atend it and the Child tould its mother that she was A witch: and then Sarah good said she did give it to the divell (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, p. 375).

Another witness told of striking out at the apparition of Sarah Good when a friend had warned that the old woman's apparition--invisible to the witness--was about to kill him and that he was told he had successfully "heet her [the specter of Good] right acors the back" (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, p. 377).

On July 19, at the gallows the Reverend Nicholas Noyes called on Sarah Good to confess, telling her she was a witch and she knew she was a witch. She replied, "You are a liar. I am no more a witch that you are a wizard, and if you take away my life God will give your blood to drink" (Hansen, 1969, p. 127). Even as she prepared to die, Sarah Good was proving herself a consort to Satan as this was not the sort of thing a dying Christian would say in the seventeenth century unless she was a witch--or a malevolent old woman.

Martha Cory Cursed As A Witch

Accused Martha Cory, a stout follower of the Puritan faith, was opinionated, prone to sarcasm and, worse, an outspoken skeptic of witchcraft (Starkey, 1950). That Martha Cory's skepticism was held against her (she indicated in her trial that she did not know of any witches and said she "did not hear" Tituba confess to practicing witchcraft) is evidence that at the time of the

Salem trials the magistrates had become witch-hunters, believing that anyone skeptical of witchcraft was a witch (Hansen, 1969).

One minister who visited Salem Village late in March 1692 reported seeing Samuel Parris' afflicted niece, eleven-year-old Abigail Williams, hurled violently back-and-forth in the parsonage by an unseen hand. At religious services the next day, Abigail interrupted the services several times with sarcastic outbursts and at one point cried out "Look where Goodwife Corey sits on the beam suckling her yellow bird betwixt her fingers" (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, p .9).

> Because he wold not mend her "Lening wheal," seventeen year old Elizabeth Hubbard called Cory a "dreadfull witch." . . . while nineteen year old Mercy Lewis echoed the curse and concluded her testimony against Martha Cory by saying "she hath very often afflected me a[nd] severall others by hir acts of witchcraft" (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, pp. 263, 266).

Rebecca Nurse Cursed As A Witch

Francis and Rebecca Nurse were considered Salem Village "gentry." Seventy-one year old Goody Nurse was considered the essence of what a Puritan mother should be: pious and well versed in and willing to quote scripture. But age had made her hard of hearing and infirm and thus on occasion temperamental (Starkey, 1950).

Rebecca had been "cried out" on; the child Ann Putnam had cursed her first, followed by the rest of the young women. The "shape" of Rebecca had tormented them. Although at the time of the alleged "torture," Rebecca Nurse's "physical part" had lain ill in her bed, her "Shape had flown about the country abusing nearly every girl" (Starkey, 1950, p. 70).

At her March 24, 1692 hearing, when asked if she was "an innocent person relating to this witchcraft," Goody Nurse's accuser was answered immediately. One of the young women--present in the court room to confront the "witch"--fell into convulsions and all of the others began a "hideous screitch and noise. . . . Amidst the general panic in the courtroom, Ann Putnam's mother yelled at Goody Nurse: Did you not bring the Black Man [Satan] with you? did you not bid me tempt God and die? How often have you eat and drunk your own damnation?" (p. 71). Rebecca Nurse cried, "Oh Lord help me!" and spread her hands helplessly only to be immediately mimicked by the girls who duplicated every movement she made (p. 72). Before the eyes of the court, it became clear that Rebecca Nurse was practicing witchcraft, the rhetorical goal of the young women who had, through word and action, successfully cursed the old woman.

In the cursing of Ann Putnam, Jr., Rebecca Nurse's "Apperishtion greviously afflected me by biting pinching and pricking . . . urgin me to writ in hir book" and also tortured the other young womaen, paritcularly during the time of Nurse's trial (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977, p. 595). Mary Walcott added that the "Aprreristion of Rebekah Nurs tould me she had a hand in" the deaths of several people while Abigail William added that Nurse had tried to tempt the girls to "leap into the fire" (pp. 596, 597).

Putnam also testified that Rebecca Nurse had threatened that she would "kill me if she could for the tould me she had killed" and that the ghosts of "six children in winding sheets which caled me aunt" appeared and threatened to "tare me to peaces" if Putnam did not reveal their murdered as "Gooddy Nurs" (p. 601).

Putnam also said that Rebecca Nurse "threatened to tare by soule out of my body" because of the victim's refusal to "yeald to hir hellish temtations" and recalled how Nurse "blasphemously" denied God and Jesus Christ. Rebecca Nurse was convicted largely on the basis of spectral afflictions which befell the elder Ann Putnam between March 19 and 24, 1692 (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1974). The encounter between Putnam and Nurse is the most vivid and intimate record of the actual process by which a "witch" was singled out for accusation.

On June 1, Rebecca Nurse was tried and found not-guilty of witchcraft. Her previously "unblemished reputation" and piety took priority over the spectral evidence provided by her young accuser's cursing which had "proven" she murdered children and killed a neighbor for letting hogs into her garden.

Bedlam broke out in the courtroom upon announcement of her innocence, and the accusers began "a howling and roaring that was both more and less than human . . . their bodies jerked and snapped." Amidst the confusion, Chief Justice Stroughton questioned the jury foreman about a statement made by one of the prisoners: accused witch Deliverance Hobbs, when brought into court to testify, upon seeing Rebecca Nurse, had said, "What, do you bring her? She is one of us." When the jury foreman questioned Rebecca Nurse about Good Hobbs' statement, the old woman--"hard of hearing and full of grief"--said nothing. The jury re-considered their original verdict in light of the two "new" incriminating factors. The renewed "cursing" of the girls through their demonstrative and frightening fits apparently proved their original judgment was flawed, and Rebecca Nurse's silence regarding the "one of us" reference was apparently an involuntary admission of guilt. Starkey (1950) observes the jury considered the statement to be an allusion to the Witches' Sabbaths in which Deliverance Hobbs had participated with Rebecca Nurse; Goody Nurse had seen her there, and did not deny it. The jury reconvened and returned to the courtroom with a verdict of guilty for Rebecca Nurse (p. 161). On Tuesday July 19, five women were hanged as witches including Sarah Good and Rebecca Nurse. (p. 176)

THE CURSING ENDS

Boyer and Nissenbaum (1977) believe, although witchcraft was considered one of the most horrible of crimes, it was also one of the most difficult to prove, since so much of it occurred in the mind of the witch. While such testimony possessed a superficial resemblance to empirical evidence, spectral evidence was flawed because it remained impossible to verify, since only the person experiencing it could see it. Even the alleged torture of the "afflicted" was spectral; the witch's "shape," visible only to the young women themselves, did the damage. As a result, spectral testimony--cursing someone as behaving like a witch--was central to any conviction in Salem (Boyer & Nissenbaum, 1977).

By October 1692, enough of Massachusetts' leaders were aware that something had gone terribly wrong in the investigating and trying of the witches for Governor Phips to stop the sessions of the Special Court of Oyer and Terminer. (The Special Court of Oyer and Terminer had been established in May of 1692 to expedite the trials--and clear the prisons--of accused witches [Hansen, 1969, p. 121]). For example, how could one be certain that Satan, with all his evil, was not able to assume the shape of an innocent person?

By November even the specters were giving indications that something had gone wrong. A seventeen year old girl testified to the Reverend John Hale and the Reverend Joseph Gerrish that one of the specters appearing in her hallucinations was none other than the wife of the Reverend Hale (Hansen, 1969).

The Reverend Increase Mather, father of Cotton, had agreed to write out arguments against the use of spectral evidence in the book *Cases of Conscience Concerning Evil Spirits*, despite his son's obsession with the invisible world and Mather's own concern about the war with Satan. Upon receiving the book, Governor Phips disbanded the Court of Oyer and Terminer, pardoned those convicted but still in jail, and the Salem witch-hunts ended.

DISCUSSION

Levak (1987) notes the witch-hunts that occurred during the three century period ending in the 1700s have been attributed to the Reformation, the Counter-Reformation, the inquisition, the use of judicial torture, the wars of religion, the religious zeal of clergy, the rise of the modern state, the development of capitalism, the widespread use of narcotics, changes in medical thought, social and cultural conflict, an attempt to wipe out paganism, the need of the ruling class to distract the masses, and the hatred of women.

Witch-hunts were not the results of extraordinary superstition or acute lack of reason, but were due in part to a public panic accompanying political and religious crises (Kittredge, 1929). The seventeenth-century was a disquieting time in colonial America as religious and political leaders sought to exercise their control. It was a time when Puritans were fighting not only the devil but anyone who posed a threat to what Foss (1996) calls "hegemony," or the privileging of an ideology of one group over that of others. Hegemony is attained and maintained though "symbolic coercion" which results in social control and domination of groups with less power by those with more. The process by which an ideology becomes hegemonic involves different groups "allowing" one of these groups to dmoniate. Once an ideology becomes hegemonic through this "accord and consent" process, it produces a rhetorical vision which controls what participants see as natural or obvious by setting the norm.

The countries which convicted and executed witches in great numbers were known for their Christian militancy, their religious intolerance and their vigorous participation in either the Reformation or the Counter-Reformation. Because of the moral instruction of Protestant and Catholic religious reformers, Puritans were obsessed with and desperate to achieve salvation.

Armstrong (1994) observes that the "God" of the Puritan Bible became a "cruel and dispotic tyrant" (p. 283). Puritans lived in terror that they would not be saved and became preoccupied with the violent, tortured" perpetual battle between the "sinner" and her or his soul. At "its worst," this Puritan God inspired "anxiety and a harsh intolerance" of those not among the "elect" (p. 284). So prosecution of intrinsically evil people who were allegedly undermining the entire moral order provided reassurance and a means for the accusers to believe in their own moral sanctity and eventual salvation.

Mills (1995) reports belief in witchcraft in New England was the product of a religious culture that taught about a struggle for the soul between God and Satan. God won the virtuous; Satan captured the weak. Those who questioned either the power of religion over their lives or their own lot in life--usually women--might conduct themselves in ways that convinced their communities that they were witches. Anyone different might fall victim to a convenient social control: an accusation of witchcraft. It was an acceptable, religiously based explanation for events that seemed inexplicable (Mills, 1995).

The witch--generally an older, unmarried woman, "eccentric or nonconformist"--was viewed by her accusers and prosecutors as a rebel against God and thus a conspirator against the political, social and moral order of "man." Her inflation, an increase in poverty, pressure by a growing population on a limited supply of resources, the growth of the unattached female populations and changes in the structure of the family were all factors. Some women may have been accused because they were most negatively affected by such change. When combined with the religious and political changes of this period, social and economic change created a mood of anxiety in all segments of society that made men more aware of the danger of witchcraft in the world and more desperate to counter it. Europe was experiencing unprecedented inflation and a decline in the standard of living as well as the growth of capitalism, the emergence of the modern state, rebellions and civil wars, unprecedented international conflict and the destruction of the unity of medieval Christendom. These changes took a heavy psychic toll. For a population that believed in the fixed order of the cosmos, the transformation of every aspect of their lives was disturbing. It created deep fear among those who were unable to cope with the instability of the new world.

This anxiety created a mood that encouraged witch-hunting. It encouraged a tendency to attribute the turmoil to the influence of Satan, a process which in turn suggested the activity of witches. Many of the concrete signs of social disintegration--religious dissent, popular rebellion, poverty--were often attributed to Satan. The best ways to counteract him was to prosecute those who had made pacts with him. Witch-hunts could also heal, at least temporarily, divisions in society by focusing attention of a common enemy and distract them from other concerns. Witches became the scapegoats of entire communities.

Puritan clergy perceived women as innately weak and also guilty of sins of anger, envy, malice, and pride. Accordingly, it was easy to curse women as “witches” and so blame them for problems that defied explanation (MacFarlane, 1970; Karlsen, 1989). An additional reason for women being targeted as witches was they had neither the physical or political power of men. As a result, they had more difficulty than men acquiring literal and rhetorical power. Because they had no legal or judicial power, accused women found it more difficult than men to defend themselves against charges of witchcraft in court.

The unmarried status of many women charged with witchcraft contributed to allegations made against them. In a patriarchal society, women who answered neither to father or husbands were bothersome, if not fearful. Such fears may have motivated neighbors who charged and authorities who persecuted these unmarried, often older women.

Women may also have been the primary targets of witch-hunts in order to constrain their behavior, particularly if it was considered too assertive or aggressive. Male dominance was assumed in Puritan New England. Men controlled political life, voted, held public office, were heads of families and considered wiser than women (Demos, 1982). Phillips (1993) argues that cursing women as witches was a strategy of oppression. The "real crimes" of women cursed as witches, in this view, were committed against the femininity that Puritan leaders were determined to preserve. Some of these women owned their own businesses, some did not attend church, some were "differently religious," some were outspoken, some owned or stood to inherit property--all atypical for seventeenth century New England women.

If women's physical acts, social and religious standings result in them being cursed as witches, certainly their speech acts served as a catalyst for their ultimate oppression. One way a woman could become cursed as a witch was by engaging in forbidden or disapproved speech acts and in so doing, threaten an institutionalized male role was suspect (Jamaieson, 1995). Verbal attacks on others--slander, defamation, "filthy speeches," "scandalous speeches"--were frequent crimes that warranted charges of witchcraft (Demos, 1982, p. 77)

Each instance of inappropriate speech specified a nonrational genesis for female speech and thus served as "evidence" to prove that male speech was superior. The witch's speech originated either from the devil or from a demented mind. The witch voiced the devil's thoughts, was given no credit for using her intellect because that would have undercut what Jamieson calls the "womb/brain" bind (Jamieson ,1995, p. 84).

In Massachusetts, more "witches" were convicted of "assaultive speech" than any other crime. What they said was as menacing to the "status quo" as the fact that they had spoken it and the "witches" often died in ways that symbolized the extinction of that speech (Jamieson, 1995, p. 88). Jamieson suggests that fiery words were drenched permanently by drowning; hanging simultaneously choked the ability to speak and the speaker.

The church offered the threatening woman the opportunity to repent her public speech, an act reestablishing the power of male discourse. Only when women refused was their verbal defiance punished with the permanent silence of ostracism or death. Accordingly, both the witch was invited to recant, a metaphor suggesting that she reclaim her speech from its public sphere and seal it within herself (Jamieson, 1995).

Recalling Foss' (1996) argument that discourse maintains an hegemonious ideology, it follows that a patriarchal society would more than likely accept as natural discourse which disparages women over men or women who behave outside the normal parameters determined by an hegemonical vision. It would also follow that a theocratic society would condemn not only evil speech but speech uttered by an evil person such as a witch. These twin ideologies merged into a hegemonious vision in seventeenth-century Puritan America to produce the rhetorical environment hostile to anyone whose speech or gender offended this hegemony.

To hold the speech of women in check, the clergy and courts devised labels discrediting "womanly" speech (Jamieson, 1995, p. 84) and cursing them as heretics, hysterics--and witches. In using such labels, opponents of women's rights exercised one of language's most powerful properties: the capacity to name. Each label identified its object as a deviant to be shunned and deprived the speaker of those audiences disposed to listen to a woman, but disinclined to hear a witch. (Jamieson, 1995).

It may seem ironic that the initial instigators of the cursing were themselves young women. Foss (1996) contends that resistance to a dominant ideology is weakened, in part, by the rhetorical strategy of incorporating the resistance into the dominant discourse in such a way that the challenge will not contradict and may even support the hegemony. In a culture where women were seen as inferior or, particularly in this case, as more likely to be possessed by the "devil," questions about why young women could credibly "curse" other women as witches become insignificant. It may have been that these youngsters engaged in the act of "cursing" their mothers, sisters and other females as "witches" because they were women in a society girded by patriarchy, reinforced by Puritanism. Perhaps they saw that the only way to survive in the dominant hegemonical rhetorical world to which they were born was to rhetorically co-opt and join in the discourse that created it.

It is also interesting to speculate about the influence of intra-gender dynamics on the Salem trials. Would they have worked the same way if the initial evidence had come from men? Perhaps not, because, logical or not, the fact that the "already tainted" women were accusing other women through the rhetorical structure of cursing may have made the accusation of witchcraft and the words the young women uttered all the more venomous and so persuasive. Rather than causing the testimony to be discredited because it was spoken by a flawed source (a woman), it may have been that in this instance the testimony was doubly damning because it came from contaminated mouths of women. Bad words became even worse once spoken by such sources. One wonders what the rhetorical terrain would have looked like if the primary targets had been men and/or if the primary accusers were men? Why weren't men targeted more as witches? Perhaps they were not because, much as a virus does more damage to an already compromised system, cursing would have less effect against a Puritan man. This would have been the case particularly because the principle accusers were women and so instantly less credible than the man they would have been cursing. It would have taken more "work" to curse him as a witch because, unlike a woman, a man is not already "inherently flawed." Thus he would have been more resistant and less vulnerable to such an "opportunistic" rhetorical device as cursing.

The Salem trials of 1692 are, in Starkey's (1950) view, an allegory of modern times. Levack (1987) believes that parallels exist between the legal hunting of witches in the seventeenth-century and the ways in which modern governments have subjected political dissidents and social nonconformists to a process of judicial terror. The victims of these campaigns are no longer called witches, but the procedures that were once used against witches have been revived.

The fanaticism that fueled the Salem witch-hunt in 1692 may fuel intolerance three centuries later. Wars are waged and curses applied against people who worship, think, love, and look different. In Phillips' view (1993), "[w]e are simply 300 years more experienced at fear-driven intolerance" (p. 79).

Jamieson (1995) argues that, three and a half centuries after the Salem witch trials, while the penalties are disdain and financial loss rather than death, and the sanctions social, not theological, it is still frequently "hazardous for a woman to venture out of her 'proper sphere'" (p. 4); conditions which she concludes still persist today.

The modern Christian Right, a loose organization of religious fundamentalists, like their Puritan brothers and sisters centuries before, practice cursing of women who threaten the "Christian" ideology by "stepping outside of their proper sphere." And, like those before them, many of these contemporary cursers are themselves women. Essentially, Beverly LaHaye and her "Concerned Women for America" and Phyllis Schlafley and her "Eagle Forum" are the female intermediaries of the initially male dominated Religious Right in their attack against the "anti-family" feminists. Who better to take on the secular New Age woman (the late twentieth-century version of witch) than the Christian New Right Woman? Schlafley curses "women's liberationists as "Typhoid Marys carrying a germ" (quoted in Diamond, 1989, p. 45) while LaHaye curses feminism as an "illness" and those following it as participants in "a philosophy of death" (LaHaye, 1994).

CONCLUSION

In Puritan New England, the sin of witchcraft was particularly heinous because the witch's contract with Satan appeared as an appalling parody of the covenant between the Lord and his saints that formed so central an element in Puritan ideology. Witch-hunts had, for most intents and purposes, stopped by the end of the seventeenth and beginning of the eighteenth-centuries. A decline in religious enthusiasm--as part of a new religious climate triggered by the Reformation--resulted in a decline in commitment of militant "God-fearing Christians" to purify the world by burning witches (Levack, 1987).

However, at least for a time, cursing literally and metaphorically silenced women who challenged the hegemony of

Puritan America by naming them evil. As a result, people with different--and so threatening--ages, socioeconomic status, gender and, in particular, speech acts were symbolically and literally silenced. Cursing thus served to rhetorically sustain the puritanical religious patriarchy of seventeenth-century New England.

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MULTIPLE MEASURES OF CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS AND PREDISPOSITION IN ASSESSMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING

William E. Hanks and Karin-Leigh Spicer

In 1990 Congress passed the *Goals 2000: Educate America Act* which included this goal: "The proportion of college graduates who demonstrate an advanced ability to think critically, communicate effectively, and solve problems will increase substantially" (US Department of Education, 1991). However, five years later, Robert Ennis (1995), a major figure in the modern critical thinking movement, wrote: "Although critical thinking has often been urged as a goal of education throughout most of this century, not a great deal has been done about it (p.179)." Ennis (1990) among others (Halpern, 1993; Paul & Nosich, 1991; Facione, 1990) believes critical thinking assessment can be accomplished using a comprehensive definition of critical thinking, being clear about the purposes of assessment, and the use of multiple measures to assess this concept.

Speech communication educators agree that critical thinking is inherent in the study of communication (Ruminiski, et. al., 1994). Modern speech communication did develop from a tradition of rhetoric (Wallace, 1954; Walter, 1963; Bryant, 1971; Fritz & Weaver, 1986; Makay, 1992) but little research has been published on instruction of thinking skills in speech communication, what has been published is in the area of argumentation and debate (Williams, 1951; Beckman, 1955; Jackson, 1961; Cross, 1971; Colbert, 1987). Critical thinking as defined by most authorities traditionally has been central to most studies of rhetoric and argumentation, from Plato and Aristotle to Kenneth Burke and Stephen Toulmin. The connection between critical thinking, and rhetoric and communication, probably is obvious to most communication educators. To cite one example, Makau (1990) notes the importance of critical thinking to listening, reading intelligently, identifying assumptions and values, as well as to argumentation within various contexts including public address, small-group decision-making and personal decision-making. Students can and should be asked to apply critical thinking skills in all speech communication courses.

As Christ (1994) points out in *Assessing Communication Education*, assessment of programs should precede assessment of student outcomes (p.33). In other words, faculty should have a clear idea of a given program's purpose. We assume that most communication programs intend to improve students' critical thinking skills. Further, we assume said programs want to define critical thinking broadly to include reflective judgement in thinking about ill-structured problems, discrete thinking skills such as the ability to spot fallacious reasoning, and strong predispositions for alternatives. Based on these assumptions, we offer a comprehensive definition of critical thinking, briefly describe several standardized critical thinking tests, argue that multiple measures of critical thinking should be used in assessment, and suggest several performance assessment approaches that can be used as outcome measures within various subjects in communication.

Although there are dozens of definitions of critical thinking, there is significant overlap in most of them (Halpern, 1993). The definition that captures the essence of most definitions, and therefore the one that is most comprehensive, comes from "Critical Thinking: A Statement of Expert Consensus for Purposes of Educational Assessment and Instruction" (Facione, 1990). The definition is the product of a Delphi research project involving forty-six experts from philosophy and education. It reads:

> We understand critical thinking to be purposeful, self-regulatory judgement which results in interpretation, analysis, evaluation, and inference, as well as explanation of the evidential, conceptual, methodological, criteriological, or contextual considerations upon which that judgement is based... The ideal critical thinker is habitually inquisitive, well-informed, trustful of reason, open-minded, flexible, fair-minded in evaluation, honest in facing personal biases, prudent in making judgments, willing to reconsider, clear about issues, orderly in complex matters, diligent in seeking relevant information, reasonable in the selection of

> criteria, focused in inquiry, and persistent in seeking results which are as precise as the subject and the circumstances of inquiry permit. Thus, educating good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. It combines CT skills with those dispositions which consistently yield useful insights and which are the basis of a rational and democratic society (p.2).

This definition, though wordy and complex, includes both abilities and skills as well as important predispositions. Implicitly, it also includes knowledge and assumes the more knowledgeable the student is potentially the better thinker s/he can become. Critical thinking, however, is difficult to measure because it covers so much territory.

CRITICAL THINKING TESTS

We know of seven tests of critical thinking that can be called general thinking tests (in the sense that they measure several kinds of thinking skills rather than only one or two). We have discovered only one instrument that measures critical thinking predispositions, such as the tendency to be analytical and to seek truth. Several critics have observed that standardized critical thinking tests produce an incomplete picture of a student's thinking abilities because such tests measure only highly structured problem-solving (e.g., in an inductive or deductive logic question there is only one correct answer). As King, et. al. (1990) note, however, we need to measure thinking applied to ill-structured problems, i.e., those that have no absolute right or wrong answer (a policy argument proposal, for example). The following is a brief description of the seven critical thinking tests and their various strengths and weaknesses:

1. The Watson-Glaser Critical Thinking Appraisal (WGCTA). The WGCTA is the oldest and probably most widely used critical thinking test, and it has two parallel forms (that can be used in pre-post-test forms). It tests five types of skills: 1. inference; 2. recognition of assumptions; 3. deduction; 4.

interpretation of data; and 5. evaluation of arguments (Watson & Glaser, 1980). The WGCTA has high reliability (.70 to .82) but some critics fault it for over reliance on deductive logic and for including inductive inference questions that are overly simplistic. As is the case with all general knowledge critical thinking tests, the content of questions may seem trivial.

2. The Cornell Conditional Reasoning Test, Form X. This test by Robert H. Ennis and Jason Miller (1985) contains seventy-two test items, and is intended for junior and senior high school and first year college students. Another form, **Level Z**, is intended for undergraduates, graduate students and adults. Form X tests the ability to tell whether a statement follows from the premises, something is reliable, an observation statement is reliable, a simple generalization is warranted, an hypothesis is specific, and whether a reason is relevant. Level X contains seventy-one multiple-choice items divided among four sections: 1. inductive inference; 2. credibility of sources and observation; 3. deduction; and 4. assumption identification. The Level Z test contains fifty-two multiple-choice items with sections on deduction, meaning, credibility, induction, prediction, definition and unstated reasons, and assumptions. Reliability ratings are fairly good (Level X: .67 to .90; Level Z: .50 to .77), but the questions are sometimes too simplistic. As Ennis and Norris (1989) note, in administering this and other multiple-choice tests examinees should be allowed to explain why they answered as they did.

3. The Ross Test of Higher Cognitive Processes. Aimed at grades four through the college level, this test includes nine sections: 1. verbal analogies; 2. deduction, 3. assumption identification; 4. word relationships; 5. sentence sequencing; 6. interpreting answers to questions; 7. information sufficiency; 8. relevance in mathematics problems; and 9. analysis of attributes of complex stick figures (Ennis & Norris, 1990). Reliability estimates are exceptionally high (.92 for split-half and .94 for test-retest).

4. The New Jersey Test of Reasoning Skills. This test is intended for grades four through the college level. About one half of the test looks at classical syllogism and the meaning of categorical statements. The remainder of the test examines assumption identification, induction, good reasons, and distinguishing differences of kind and degree (Ennis & Norris, 1990). Reported reliability estimates range from .85 to .91, but these estimates are derived from non-college students. The test has been criticized for containing too many deductive logic questions and for answers keyed to specific background beliefs assumed to exist in the minds of examinees.

5. The Ennis-Weir Critical Thinking Skills Test. This is geared for seventh through college level students. It is an essay format. The test includes getting the point, offering good reasons and assumptions, stating one's point, offering good reasons, seeing other possibilities, responding to\avoiding equivocation, irrelevance, circularity, reversal of an if-then relationship, overgeneralization, credibility problems, and the use of emotive language to persuade (Ennis & Norris, 1990). A scoring guide is provided, and interrater reliability estimates are .86 and .82.

6. The California Critical Thinking Skills Test. There are two forms to this test, A and B, that can be used in pre and post-test designs. It operationalizes the conceptual definition devised by the Delphi panel sponsored by the American Philosophical Association (APA, 1990). It is a thirty-four item, multiple choice test which targets those core critical thinking skills regraded to be essential elements in a college education. The items range from those requiring an analysis of the meaning of a given sentence, to those requiring much more complex integration of CT skills. Reported reliability estimates are .70 for Form A and .71 for Form B. Some items are puzzle-like and about a third of test items contain deductive logic questions.

7. The California Critical Thinking Dispositions Inventory. The CCTDI, with seventy-five Likert style items, contain seven subscores and a total composite score (Facione & Facione, 1992). The seven scales are: 1. inquisitiveness; 2. open mindedness; 3. systematicity; 4. analyticity; 5. truth-seeking; 6. CT self-confidence; and 7. maturity. Examinees are asked to mark the degree to which they agree with statements such as, "If mark the degree to which they agree with statements such as, "If there were ten opinions on one side and one on the other, I'd go with the ten." Reported results of the inventory have consistently shown beginning college students are fairly strongly predisposed against truth-seeking. This instrument would seem quite useful in revealing attitudes of students toward critical thinking.

As we have noted, however each of the standardized instruments shares the basic weakness of reducing critical thinking to a set of responses. For that reason, among others, we strongly argue for the use of multiple measures of critical thinking, including, open-ended performance measures.

MULTIPLE MEASURES

Critical thinking is not a general ability but a complex of general and specific factors (Follman, et. al., 1969; Follman, et. al., 1970). The APA Delphi Consensus definition of critical thinking seems clearly to recognize that point. And psychologists who have experimented with critical thinking, including Robert Sternberg (1987), favor multiple-measures of CT because no single test covers the dimensions of a good conceptual definition of critical thinking.

Ennis (1993) advises that for comprehensive assessment of critical thinking:

> Unless appropriate multiple-choice tests are developed, open-ended assessment techniques are probably needed...In making your own, test, it is probably better that it be at least somewhat open-ended, anyway, since making good multiple-choice tests is difficult and time consuming...open-ended assessment is better adapted to do-it yourself makers and can be more comprehensive (p. 184).

Ideally, according to Ennis and Norris (1990), other measures such as interviews can elicit useful information about how well students are thinking, e.g., question and answer sessions that allow for students to explain their thinking and for teachers to ask for follow up questions.

Performance assessments are good additions to pencil-paper tasks that call for a single correct answer. These types can include a variety of projects such as case-studies, research reports and portfolios. Performance-based assessment calls for demonstration of understanding and skill in applied, procedural, or open-ended settings (Baker, O'Neil, & Linn, 1993).

A good example of a performance measure, somewhat related to critical thinking performance, is described by Morreale (1994) in discussing the SCA's "The Competent Speaker" instrument for rating students' public speaking performance on eight speaking competencies. The student chooses and narrows a topic for a specific audience and occasion and must devise a thesis or purpose, provide supporting material, organize pronunciation, articulation and grammar, and physical movement (p.222). The instrument can be used to evaluate a speaker's performance in class, for placement in or out of classes, for instruction, and for assessment of programs or curricula.

Another argument for multiple-measures concerns the testing of predispositions separately. Facione et. al.,, (1995) have noted every major theoretician since Dewey who wrote of critical thinking identified predisposition as important (pp. 1-25). Dewey (1933) argued if we were compelled to make a choice between these personal attributes and knowledge about the principles of logical reasoning together with some degree of technical skill in manipulating special logical processes, we should decide for the former.

Facione, et. al., (1995) report a study of 587 new college students at a selective private university. Only thirteen percent showed positive predisposition toward all predispositions measured (i.e., truth-seeking, open-mindedness, analyticity, systematicity, CT-self-confidence, inquisitiveness, maturity). These were strong students academically. Yet, they almost all showed some opposition to truth-seeking. So far as we know, this is the first study of predispositions in critical thinking. We need systematic evidence and profiles of students' attitudes in order to approach these attitudes directly. And conventional skills tests don't provide such evidence, for a student might display thinking skills only when required, yet be inclined not to do so at other times. Or a student might be strongly inclined to think well but simply lack the skill. We need to measure skill and tendency separately in order to teach thinking as both skill and habit of mind.

Because they believe single-answer critical thinking instruments fail to assess the production dimensions of critical thinking, some researchers have developed holistic scoring rubrics that have construct and face validity, as well as acceptable reliability (see for example, Browne, et. al., 1993). Recently, Morreale, et. al., (1993) developed a scoring rubric for public speaking competency. Designed to rate various dimensions of public speaking performance by students, the rubric calls for a panel of raters to judge competency in rhetorical invention, organization, uses of evidence, and language appropriate for specific audiences. Surely these aspects of public speaking are also dimensions of critical thinking. The authors of the rubric, "The Competent Speaker Form," report that the instrument meets criteria for content and face validity, and that judges reliably rank speakers, even though the judges vary in terms of consistently being harder or easier judges. If such holistic rubrics can be applied to dimensions of public speaking, it seems they could be devised and applied to other aspects of communication involving critical thinking. For illustration of the kinds of rubrics that can be developed for critical thinking in media education, see Ruminski & Hanks (1996).

GUIDELINES FOR CREATING CRITICAL THINKING ASSESSMENTS

The starting point for assessment of all kinds, including critical thinking, is to specify outcomes; curriculum should be designed to aid students to achieve those outcomes. This strategy can lead to coherence throughout the entire curriculum. When educators have clarity about the intended performance and results they will have a set of criteria for selection of content, reducing aimless coverage and adjusting instruction en route and students will be able to grasp their priorities from the beginning. Educators should ask: *What is most essential for students to learn? Given what I want students to learn, what counts as evidence that they understand that?* These questions combine subject matter and critical thinking. But because available standardized CT tests are general and not subject-bound, such tests cannot provide evidence of how students think about critical thinking questions in meaningful context.

1. Meaningful Context: Good performance assessments are more contextualized than traditional tests. A question we should ask is: How will students use CT skills in the larger world? The American Educational Research Association, American Psychological Association and The National Council on Measurement in Education (1985) specified the following criteria for performance assessments. They should: 1. have meaning for students and teachers and motivate high performance; 2. require the demonstration of complex cognition (e.g., problem solving, knowledge representation, explanation); 3. Exemplify current standards of content or subject matter quality; 4. minimize the effects of ancillary skills that are irrelevant to the focus of the assessment; and 5. possess explicit standards for rating or judgment. The standards that apply generally to performance assessment should apply to critical thinking assessment. How? Specific examples are needed that are highly structured with clear criteria, such as the performance assessment described by Morreale. In interpersonal communication situations, for example, case-studies could be used and student performances rated on specific criteria. In mass communication, to cite another example, students might be asked to present a synthesis of media effects and to argue for or against a specific government policy on media regulations.

Performance measures of thinking can be used as students progress through a given program, for example, during the junior and senior years. Unlike standardized non-subject specific critical thinking tests, however, performance measures should not be used as pretest measures as students enter the major. The reason should be obvious--students cannot be assumed to possess the required knowledge to handle context-bound thinking tasks before they have taken the courses that provide subject-specific critical thinking.

2. Thinking Process in Performance Assessments: Ask students to actually use knowledge, to thoughtfully address situations that are novel to them. This is not to say that certain discrete skills, such as the ability to identify assumptions, cannot be taught as discrete skills. It is merely to say that the value in thinking skills is whether they transfer to meaningful and unique contexts. However, a skill that is cut free from content and context is measurable and teachable, but of only limited value. Generic CT skills and their assessments do not reveal the depth and breadth of student knowledge. For example, Paul and Nosich (1991) list seventeen critical thinking abilities. These include refining generalizations and avoiding oversimplification, clarifying issues, conclusions and beliefs, generating or assessing solutions, and analyzing or evaluating actions or policies. Such skills can be learned, but they probably are best learned if placed in meaningful context.

3. Appropriate Product or Performance: Avoid using products or performances that don't relate to the content of what is being assessed. Sometimes students as well as educators can get caught up in the product and lose sight of what they're actually intending to show with the product.

4. How Material is Taught: Good CT assessments are designed to guide, not limit, instruction. They should not infringe on educators' abilities to choose particular methods and to design lessons and courses in ways that reflect the best available research and which are best suited to their students' needs.

5. Multiple Performance Levels: It is not realistic to expect all students to meet the same standard. Multiple standards can set expectations to match different aspiration and achievements. A single standard would either have to be set low enough for most students to pass or too high for many to reach. Setting standards that are within reach but still require hard work can stretch students to their potential. For example, require all students to meet a common standard for obtaining their degree, but also create a higher standard for students who attain that initial level earlier or who wish to qualify for more selective higher education.

CONCLUSION

We have argued that multiple-measures are needed to assess students' critical thinking abilities. Standardized critical thinking tests can provide useful information that is diagnostic and may help to guide instruction. But instruction cannot be limited to teaching the skills measured by the instruments. To measure thinking skills that require application of knowledge requires specially designed tasks, including performance tasks for which there are specified outcome criteria but for which there can be established general evaluation rubrics. Finally, we should emphasize that the purpose of assessment should be to improve instruction, learning and programs, and all data in that context should regard both as formative and summative.

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A VIEW FROM WITHIN: A CASE STUDY OF ORGANIZATIONAL NARRATIVE BEHAVIOR

Patricia A. Cutspec

Organizational storytelling research can be culled into a topology comprised of story types (Kelly 1985; Mitroff & Kilmann, 1975), the impact and effect of stories on organizational life (Deal & Kennedy, 1982; Frost et al., 1985; Pacanowsky & O'Donnell-Trujillo, 1982; 1983), and interpretations of the meaning of individual stories (Brown, 1985; Browning, 1992; Colvin, Kilmann, & Kilmann, 1994). Indeed, most related research studies emphasize description and classification but neglect to consider *reasons* for narrative behavior, as described by the creators and disseminators of organizational narratives. While "it is inherently interesting to examine the content of stories that arise in a variety of organizations, it is perhaps more interesting to ask *why* these stories have proliferated while others have not" (Martin, Feldman, Hatch, & Sitkin, 1983) (emphases added).

Although contemporary theorists have begun storytelling research at the point of the story, the focus of this project is to explore *with* the members of the organization reasons *why* they create, circulate, and withhold organizational narratives. The purpose of this article is to present a case study of narrative behavior. The case study is guided by three goals: a) to discern a *behavioral* topology of organizational narration; b) to explore reasons *why* the members of one organization create, circulate, and withhold organizational narratives; and c) to trace *how* these narratives are circulated.

For the purposes of this investigation, the broader term *narrative,* rather than story, is used to guide analysis of the data. This conceptualization follows Fisher's (1987) description of narration as "symbolic actions -- words and/or deeds -- that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them" (p. 58). The narrative paradigm, as conceived by Fisher is a "philosophy of reason, value, and action" (p. 59). In this study, organizational narratives include stories, anecdotes, and descriptions used by the participants to describe their *reasons* for behaving, the *value* placed on behaviors, and *actions* resulting from interpretations of these reasons and values.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

All of the members of a computer consulting organization located in Washington, D. C. are included in this study. At the onset of the research, "TATAM" (a pseudonym for the organization) had ten full-time employees and three sub-contracting representatives from other firms who work with the organization on a regular basis. Additionally, 11 former employees of TATAM, including two of the three original founders, agreed to participate.

Procedures

Permission to conduct the research was obtained by submitting a letter of proposal to the president of TATAM. Once permission had been granted, the project was explained to all participants, and dates and times for initial interviews were arranged. During these semi-structured interviews, each participant was asked three open-ended questions: please tell me your favorite stories, anecdotes, or descriptions about: (1) the history of TATAM; (2) the organization as it exists today; and (3) your vision for the future of TATAM.

Additionally, the participants were asked to recall the origins and actual and/or intended destinations of the narratives they shared with the researcher (as they were telling them), and to describe reasons regarding when and why they have circulated and withheld these narratives. According to Yin (1984), "a major way of improving the quality of case studies and assuring their construct validity is to have the drafts reviewed by those who have been the subjects of the study" (pp. 138-139). In an effort to reduce potential distortion of participant recall and increase the validity of the author's interpretations, two data-review cycles were built into this research. All of the subjects consented to having all three phases of interviews audio-taped and the recordings were transcribed for purposes of analysis. The 72 interviews ranged in length from 30 minutes to two hours and the transcripts from individual interviews ranged from seven to 41 pages.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this investigation had three phases. Initially, narratives were extracted from the transcripts and thematically categorized in two ways. First, the narratives were categorized according to their content; these categories were not imposed apriori by the researcher; they emerged after a careful reading of the data. Second, the narratives were categorized according to the perspectives from which they were told. These categories were based on hierarchical, tenure, and contextual (members of the home office as compared to the members working on-site) distinctions in order to provide the detail necessary to trace the actual and/or intended destinations of the narratives.

The second phase of data analysis involved reviewing the transcripts in order to trace reasons for circulating and withholding narratives as told by the participants. Finally, a careful reading of the data revealed the origins and the actual and/or intended destinations of the stories, anecdotes, and descriptions shared by the participants during the interviews. The results discerned through this initial data analysis were compared with the data collected during the two review cycles. What follows is a description of the collective findings discerned through the three phases of data analysis.

FINDINGS

Categorization of Narratives

The narratives shared by the participants cluster into 13 thematic categories: the history of TATAM, the organization's name, how people became associated with TATAM, how TATAM developed into what it is now, the people of the organization, perceived roles and expectations, the current president, the social characteristics of TATAM, the training program, incentives and rewards, the reputation of TATAM, visions for the future, and legislation (the Small Business Administration awards certification to small, minority-owned and controlled organizations and this often has a constraining impact on non-organizations such as

TATAM). Further, a careful reading of the data reveals that the narratives were told from five different perspectives and that the focus of the narratives differed accordingly. The emergent perspective categories are: the founders of TATAM, the current president, the current employees, the alumni of TATAM, and the subcontracting representatives from other firms.

BEHAVIORAL TOPOLOGY OF ORGANIZATIONAL NARRATION

Although the preceding categorizations help to reveal the content and contextual authors or disseminators of narratives about TATAM, they do not aid in the discernment of how and why these narratives are used by the participants. Through this research, an alternative topology was sought, one that acknowledges the creation and exchange of organizational narratives. The categorical scheme that emerged from this investigation is based on **construction, origination,** and **dissemination** of narratives. By using this topology, the focus shifts away from analyses of content (what narratives are told) and function (the ways in which they impact organizational life), and toward the identification of narrative *behavior* (*why* they are told and *how* they are told). The behavioral topology revealed through this research includes four guidelines regarding the transmission of organizational narratives.

First, there are **original-withheld** narratives constructed (or verbalized) during the interview and shared by the participant for the first time. These narratives include first-hand experiences the organizational actor has had, but has not disclosed to anyone prior to the interview. Second, the **original-shared** narratives were identified through the data analysis.These were narratives constructed by the participant (also based on first-hand experiences or perceptions), and repeated to other members of the organization prior to the interview. Third, there are **received-withheld** narratives that have been told to (or overheard by) the organizational actor, but have not been repeated by him or her to other members of the organization prior to the interview. Finally, **received-shared** narratives that had been told to (or overheard by) the organizational actor and repeated by him or her on at least one occasion prior to the interview, have been discerned through this research. This topology offers a method for discerning how narratives change over time and how and why they are added to and removed from circulation.

For example, two of the current members of TATAM offered a number of **received-withheld** narratives during our interviews. "Vince" claimed that he "does not volunteer stories or anecdotes or pass on second-hand illustrations." Vince has been with TATAM "since the early days" and is often approached for clarification regarding the history of the organization. When this occurs, Vince said he "tries to pass on stories about the corporate history honestly, but not negatively." Interestingly, many of the narratives offered by the newer members of TATAM regarding this time period in the development of the organization include Vince's "positive adaptations" of the actual events.

Similarly, "Ron" offered stories and descriptions that he had been told, but had not repeated prior to the interview. He claims that he would only exchange stories or descriptions with people who had participated in the events that the stories are used to illustrate. He believes that since they (the alums or other co-participators) "share a common vantage point for any particular event that took place," there is "no breach of confidentiality."

As the members of TATAM make decisions to withhold specific illustrations of organizational life, these narratives slowly disappear and are replaced with examples that reflect the social reality of TATAM that the authors *wish* to portray. Given this adaptation and exchange process, it is reasonable to suggest that narrative behavior may supersede the actual content of stories, anecdotes, and descriptions regarding the manner in which these phenomena impact the symbolic structure of an organization.

The participants identified 11 ways in which they *intentionally* use narratives to encourage, dissuade, explain, or guide organizational action. Additionally, participants isolated seven reasons why they do *not* repeat organizational narratives that have been told to or overheard by them. These results are collectively described here; throughout the course of the two review cycles, all of the participants agreed that these descriptions were representative of their behavior.

REASONS FOR CIRCULATING ORGANIZATIONAL NARRATIVES

Jim Long, the president of TATAM, explained how he uses stories and anecdotes to provide "a vehicle for explaining something that is difficult for others to grasp." For example, whenever he has trouble conveying how he would like his employees to "give more" to the organization, he claims he "turns to analogies to help them understand how to get started." When asked to provide an illustration, Jim responded with his "onion story:"

> TATAM, to me, has been like an onion where you just take one peel off at a time only to realize that there's another peel within that and another peel within that and you cry all the way through. There's [sic] layers; when you get the technical layer done, there's a management layer; when you get the management layer done, there's a human aspects layer; when you get through the human aspects layer -- there's no end to the layers. And for some reason, Jim Long is willing to rip off that first layer and see what's there. I wish I could get everybody else to do that. They don't have to peel or cry as much as I do, but I'd like to see them peel some. Why they won't do this is the peel I'm working on right now.

Interestingly, while the other members of TATAM claim that they have come to "expect and endure" Jim's analogies, they describe this method of narration as "rationalizing." Whereas Jim Long believes these types of narratives are the only resource he has for "explaining what [the other members of TATAM] cannot understand," the other participants claimed they understand the business quite well; they "just feel differently about it than he does."

Second, several of the participants commented that narratives provide them with a method for explaining untoward behavior. For example, when Jim is accused of "doing things on the cheap," the members of TATAM use historical descriptions regarding the "financial mess" that Jim had to climb out of in order to explain the continuance of his "depression-era mentality:"

> Jim has a depression-era mentality, which comes from working with a company that was $100,000 in debt. You don't buy subscriptions to magazines when you're that much in debt; you pay off the IRS first. That's why the office isn't exactly, well, palatial. We went through hard times when we were never sure if we could make payroll from one week to the next. We could not go out and buy a piece of office furniture or equipment or have a party for the staff. It was hard, really hard.

Third, the participants said they use organizational narratives to reinforce their attitudes and beliefs and to maintain "their unity apart from Jim." Many of the participants perceive Jim Long as a stifling influence on the development of the organization, and the participants admitted to circulating narratives that reinforce this belief. For example, there is a shared perception among all of the participants (except Long) that "Jim adopts a reactive and shallow, crisis orientation" to organizational issues. As one participant described:

> Jim's mentality is too short-term. He uses a crisis-management style; wait till it happens and see if he can solve it. It's almost a game to him, where his opponent is a situation that he has probably created. But he needs to win, always win. He just doesn't realize that he's fighting himself. But I think he enjoys his wars. Once a challenge has been created and he can struggle some more and then complain about it, he's happy. It's interesting; he always uses a shallow solution to problems. He just goes so far and then he quits. That's the way he designs things and treats people. So, he creates problems and never really solves them, which creates more problems. He always has a crisis to get through.

The members of TATAM also claim to circulate narratives among themselves in order to maintain their own esprit de corps. As one interviewee offered, “we have our stories and thoughts about Jim and we don’t include him in a lot of our ‘family’ discussions; that sort of keeps the rest of us together.”

Jim also claims to use stories and descriptions to reinforce his attitudes and beliefs; however, his narrative emphasis was on the “laziness of his workers” and how *they* are stifling the development of the organization. As he explained,

> I guess there are two different kinds of people in any company. There are employees who come to work at nine and leave at five. And then there are the others who are interested in a real career and say, "I know I need to do the nine-to-five because the company needs to survive, but in order to grow, I’ll put in nine-to-five plus two." Unfortunately, I put in nine-to-five plus twenty and I’m lucky to get an honest nine-to-three out of my people.

The participants also explained how they use narratives to“test reality” by comparing their perceptions with those of others and to clarify something they have been told. For example, one interviewee claimed that she noticed “Jim’s habit of being overly-positive and somewhat naive” about the status of the organization. This has evolved into a running joke about Jim’s “pronoid” orientation. As one participant explained, “I think Jim tends to be very rose colored, maybe even pronoid -- the opposite of paranoid; we call him our proniodian from the planet exemplar.” One of the alums expanded this view by saying, “he [Jim] paints a rosy picture to diffuse potential complaints; that way he can shift the focus away from important issues . . . You sit here and you listen to him over periods of time and you recognize the same patterns, the same type of code words, the same sort of methodology for communicating; he’s completely image oriented and outer directed.”

While Jim uses “positive narratives” to “encourage faith in the organization,” the other members of TATAM doubt the credibility of his “pontifications.” As one interviewee commented, "when Jim tells me a story about a wonderful new contract, the first thing I do is check around to see if anyone knows anything about it; if not, the red flag stays up and we usually catch Jim in another lie."

The participants also said they share organizational narratives for social reasons. The participants claim that narrative behavior is "therapeutic" and that it helps them to maintain relationships with one another after they leave TATAM. Further, the alums seem to work hard at staying in touch with one another. As one of these participants explained, "Most of the ex-employees still keep in touch. As a matter of fact, I'm having an ex-TATAM party this weekend. . . .You have to understand that we are loyal to each other, so we'll get together and tell each other that 'Jim says you're blah, blah, blah' and they say 'oh yes, well he says you're blah, blah, blah.' . . . We did that then and we still do it now."

The sixth reason for circulating stories and descriptions identified by the participants concerns the role of organizational narratives in socializing new members. Jim claims that he tells stories to potential members for two reasons: to "entice them" and to "scare them." As one of the interviewees commented, "Jim said to me, 'do you have an interest in the shady side of things, like the secret world of the CIA? . . . If you work for me, I can get you a security clearance and you can learn all about that stuff." Jim said that he also tells "potentials" stories designed to keep them from "abandoning" him after they have been trained; "I tell new employees about the lawsuits I've brought against people in order to dissuade them from burning me too."

The other members of TATAM, both past and present, claim to use their "newcomer stories" to "paint a realistic picture of what working for Jim is like." For example, one current TATAM member shared this story:

> Someone who was thinking of working for TATAM called me to ask what it was like. She said that Jim promised a lot of marketing and sales experience, which is what she was looking for. I was honest and told her that when I go out into the marketplace, this is my typical conversation with a

potential customer:
"What is TATAM charging?"
"Well, you'll have to talk to Jim about that."
"How many people can you give us?"
"You'll have to talk to Jim about that."
"Well, when can TATAM be ready?"
"You'll have to talk to Jim about that."
"Why am I talking to you?"
"You'll have to talk to Jim about that."

The current employees of TATAM are adamant about "reaching new employees before Jim does" in order to portray an objective view of the company. One participant explained, "I am very careful to tell stories that would not overrate the situation, primarily because I wouldn't want someone coming on board and being totally disappointed within a week . . . Jim has gotten us into trouble that way."

The participants claim that one of their most consistent reasons for sharing organizational narratives is to counteract negative verbiage about the company. Jim Long said that he has to "counteract [his] negative image that has been fabricated by a few former employees" and believes that narratives are an effective method for doing this. He maintains that he is "a victim of misunderstanding," and offered this story to illustrate his perception:

> One of the interesting things about my life is that I've always been a doer; buy a house, build cabinets, put on a new roof, and fix my own car. But around me, there are a whole bunch of people who are not doers. But they are the first to criticize my actions. For example, I built all of my kitchen cabinets. I never built one before, but this time I did it all: the top ones, the bottom ones, I put in the stove, did all the linoleum, did all the plumbing, electric and gas. A whole kitchen! And then one of these guys came walking into this room, which I've just completely gutted and redid from scratch, he come over and says 'this seam isn't very good

> right here.' Can you imagine? That's what I feel like at TATAM.

In addition to the above reasons and/or guidelines for narrative behavior, the participants said that they use organizational stories and anecdotes to convey expectations and to help initiate growth. For example, when asked by one of the newer members of TATAM where he can expect to find available contracts, Jim responded with this story:

> You can find potential business everywhere! Once I went to a conference and they had a hot tub at the hotel. I sat in the tub to relax and in comes this woman wearing a paper bathing suit. I started up a conversation about it and then we switched to business talk. Within an hour I wound up with a big contract! Never give up and never underestimate the potential of any situation.

This has become known as the "paper-chase story" among the members of TATAM and while the participants are "trying to let it die," Jim continues to use this illustration to socialize newcomers.

Finally, the newer members of the organization said they rely on narratives to educate people about how TATAM operates and to provide feedback to Jim regarding how the organization is being perceived. Because there is a consensually shared equation that "TATAM *is* Jim" (because "he will not relinquish power" or "delegate responsibility"), the participants qualified that most of the feedback they receive and circulate regarding the organization is really feedback about Jim. As one member of TATAM offered, "from time to time, I have to pull Jim aside and say, 'Jim, look what you're doing and listen to what you say to people, and this is what they perceive you to be.'" This guideline for narrative behavior was particularly emphasized by the subcontracting representatives who are "well plugged into the larger system."

REASONS FOR WITHHOLDING ORGANIZATIONAL NARRATIVES

The participants were able to isolate seven reasons why they do not repeat organizational narratives told to or overheard by them. First, there is a shared belief that the narratives circulating about TATAM are "destructive" and "counterproductive." As one participant explained, "there is no logical reason to feed into a grapevine that is already out of control."

Second, the participants claim that "stories about individual members of TATAM are not circulated if they can damage their reputation or hurt their career." Third, several of the participants said that they do not share information that "could get themselves into trouble." All of the members of TATAM (both past and present) are aware of pending lawsuits and they "do not wish to be next."

The participants also said they do not repeat organizational narratives if they would be violating the trust of someone they respect, if they would "get someone else into trouble," if they illustrate an attitude or belief counter to what they perceive (e.g., two of the alums claimed that if they heard a "nice Jim story" they would "bury it"), or if a narrative is completely "inappropriate" for a particular audience.

Adherence to these precepts varies across perspective categories. For example, the founders of TATAM agreed that they have repeated and will continue to repeat all of the stories, anecdotes, and descriptions they told the researcher to anyone who inquires about their involvement with the organization. According to these participants, the only narratives they do not circulate concern the financial status of the organization (while they were in control of TATAM) and the conflicts that emerged between the founders and the original board of directors. As one of the founders explained, "it is better to let sleeping dogs lie." Consequently, narratives about these two issues were not offered by the founders during the interviews. One alum provided an explanation for this omission. She explained how one of the founders (the only one who would not consent to an interview) is under a court order *not* to talk about the organization. Apparently, there is "bad blood" among the original founders as well as between the founders and Jim Long. The legal action taken against this former member of the organization acts as a deterrent to any exchange of "negative" verbiage.

Among the current members of TATAM, there are dichotomous philosophies about narrative behavior. While Jim Long believes that TATAM is and should be "an open book" and that he "loves to tell stories and use examples," one of the other members believes that "what is going on with TATAM is no one's business." The remaining members of the organization fall between these two perspectives, although there is a shared philosophy regarding the need to keep stories about "disenchantment" within the boundaries of the organization. There is a tandem recognition among the members of TATAM that this desire is unrealistic. As one participant explained, "the [alum] association of TATAM is a lot bigger than the current organization and some of them are real negative about having worked here . . . it is difficult to discourage them from sharing their experiences with others." One alum offered, "I would tell anyone anything; I don't feel like any of it or very little of it is private business." Another explained, "my experience with TATAM was so negative; it is therapeutic to find others who feel the same way just to get it off my chest." The close associates of TATAM express an opposite view. These participants claim they "do not repeat what they have heard about TATAM to anyone except the members of their own organizations when they may be hurt by the omission of professionally damaging information."

ACTUAL AND/OR INTENDED ORIGINS AND DESTINATIONS OF NARRATIVES

In tracing the origins and destinations of the narratives, it is obvious that the originators and disseminators cluster into identifiable coalitions that have become patterned over time. However, it is important to recognize that many of the participants had social and/or professional links to one another **before** they became associated with TATAM. These preassociational influences suggest two implications for narrative research. First, because the Model 330 community is small, many of the members of TATAM (past and present) began to receive and circulate narratives about the organization prior to membership. The encouragement of this behavior has had a stifling impact on the development of the organization. For the members of TATAM who entered the organization with preconceived perceptions of "the way things work," the emphasis became one of *enactment* or *re-creation* rather than construction; the social reality of the organization had already been interpreted and their behavior was immediately focused on *enacting* these interpretations.

Second, the coalitions of narrators not only impact the development of TATAM by extending perceptions **before** association, these groups are actually maintained and appear to become stronger **after** an individual has become disassociated from the organization. According to one alum, "we've all stayed friends and worked with each other in area jobs in Model 330; it's such a small community that if you change jobs, you're always working with someone you worked with before or with somebody who knows somebody you worked with before." Therefore, the alums may have more of an ongoing impact on the structure of the organization than current members because these disassociated alums have a role in shaping the perceptions of prospective employees and encouraging the circulation of narratives after an employee leaves TATAM.

Narrative Origins

When the interviewees were asked from whom they received the stories they shared with the researcher, nine points of origin emerged. Five of these nine sources are actually small coalitions of TATAM employees (labeled as such on the basis of philosophical unification regarding narrative behavior) and four are individuals.

The founders of TATAM comprise the first coalition of narrators. Jim Long, Vince (the participant who has been with the organization the longest), and two of the alums identify this coalition as their source for organizational narratives. The second and third multi-member source coalitions are composed of alums. These coalitions are identified by one another as well as by some of the current members of TATAM as the most active sources of stories and descriptions about the organization. All of the members of both alum groups stay in contact with one another, primarily through Model 330 and the ex-TATAM parties that have become a tradition.

The current members of TATAM cluster into two coalitions of narrators.The three participants who work together on-site describe themselves as cohesive and claim that they share all narratives with one another before speaking to anyone else. The other coalition of narrators at TATAM consists of the four employees who are working in the home office with Jim. These members of TATAM describe themselves as "isolated" and 'basically uninformed." They share whatever narratives they receive (which are usually initiated by Jim) with one another and therefore identify one another and Jim as the primary origins of the narratives they have been "received."

Among the individual sources identified, Jim was the only one mentioned by all of the participants (except the founders) as the source for some, if not all of the organizational narratives they have been told. What is interesting about this particular point of origin is that Jim is not described as a "credible" source by those who identified him. As one alum explained, "Jim loves to tell stories [but] after awhile, we all learned to take them with a grain of salt because he is basically a dishonest person."

The remaining three individuals cited as narrative origins are "Carol" (the other major stockholder in the company who is perceived as possessing a "strong loyalty" to Jim) and the two presidents of other firms in the area (these origins were revealed by the two subcontracting representatives interviewed; these participants claim that most of the stories and descriptions they have heard about TATAM were told to them by the presidents of their "home" organizations).

The data collected during the three phases of interviews reveal unequivocally that these coalitions exist and are active. Further, the recognition that almost all of the alums and current members of TATAM are associated with a small community of Model 330 specialists helps to create an awareness of the interconnected paths that narratives about TATAM travel. The links are strong and the paths are patterned. However, the path an organizational narrative travels may be equally dependent on requests for information as it is on the natural course of interaction.

Narrative Destinations

The actual and/or intended destinations for organizational narratives are a bit more difficult to trace because the participants were unable to recall with total precision, with whom they have circulated the stories and descriptions they shared with the researcher. However, most of the participants were able to speculate with whom they may have shared the stories based on their individual philosophies for circulating information. Additionally, a number of the interviewees isolated situations in which their reasons for sharing organizational narratives is intentional and habitual.

The current employees of TATAM claim to be discriminating regarding the narratives that they have and will share with one another and those external to the organization. As mentioned, some of these interviewees do not "feed negative stories" into the "old employee grapevine," while others explained that while they do not "volunteer" negative information, they have been "honest with anyone who asks about the company." Additionally, although the three senior-level associates "speak freely among themselves," they do not circulate negative narratives about the history of the organization, Jim Long, or "members of the [alum] association" with newer employees (except to "paint a realistic picture of life at TATAM" to prospective employees). Further, these members of TATAM claim that they will discuss "business and past events" with the alums, but they "draw the line there for the good of the organization." These interviewees also said they intentionally share with Jim the stories and descriptions they hear about him. As one participant explained, "we need to clean up our image and I feel free to say anything to Jim that will help us do that."

The alums of TATAM share a belief that their intended destinations for organizational narratives include "anyone who wants to listen." These participants believe that prospective employees "have a right to know what they're getting themselves into." Even though the alums claim they share narratives intentionally with "anyone and everyone," they recognize the damage caused by their behavior. As one alum explained, "I think throughout the years that storytelling made people more acutely aware of TATAM's problems than they would have been otherwise

. . . there is no doubt it has caused unhappiness and bad morale."

The subcontracting representatives claim their only **intended** destination for narratives about TATAM are the members of their own companies when these narratives "help them to decide whether or not to work with TATAM on a project." However, they did admit that **actual** destinations (primarily conversational stories) "may be a bit more broad." These participants said they circulate "generic and already established" stories about TATAM, Jim Long, and TATAM's alums with the other members of the organization with whom they work.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

Organizational communication theorists (see for example Myrsiades, 1987) have argued that detailed work on organizational stories and narratives has been rather limited. In the spirit of the goals outlined for this project, four conclusions can be drawn from the results and added to our knowledge base about these phenomena.

First, the behavioral topology of narrative behavior revealed through this research provides an understanding of how and why narratives change over time and the reasons why they are circulated and withheld. By recognizing idiosyncratic and shared philosophies regarding narrative practices, the birth and degeneration of stories, anecdotes, and descriptions can be traced.

For example, the founders of TATAM explained how the name TATAM began as TT&M (the first initial of each of their last names). However, one of the board members at the time decided that using three initials did not distinguish TATAM from any of the other consulting organizations in the area, and the name was altered by inserting A's between the initials. While Jim Long admitted to having *received* this story when he became associated with TATAM, he has decided to *withhold* it from current employees. When someone questions him about the name, he offers them an original-shared narrative, one that describes him as the creator of the name. Jim expressed the belief that "[he] saved the organization from financial ruin [and he] has the right to re-write the history." It is his wish that the "*true* history of the organization be replaced by the *new* history." The behavioral topology revealed through this research offers one way to tap into the life span of organizational narratives such as this.

The second conclusion offered by the results of this study is an extension of the first. While the topology offers a way to tap into the circulation and withholding of narratives, tracing the origins and destinations helps to identify the "paths" they travel and how their creation, maintenance, and transformations emerge. This research supports Myrsiades (1987) belief that stories can be viewed as interlocutors of tradition and change by revealing why and how they change over time and how transformations impact members' interpretations of the organization. Further, tracing points of origin can help to reveal extra-structural coalitions of narrators that are extended, environmental influences on an organization. The "alum association" of TATAM has acted as a entropic influence on the development of the organization by keeping destructive narratives about TATAM in circulation.

Third, this study illustrates how narrative behavior may actually supersede the content of narratives regarding the manner in which they impact an organization. Asking the members of an organization to describe *why* they create, circulate, and withhold narratives is a valuable tool for helping us to understand how they are used. For example, most of the narratives Jim circulates focus on two themes: defending his actions and promoting himself. According to Martin et al. (1983), organizational actors often use stories as "self-serving rationalizations of the past" (p. 447) by weaving them into the form of attributions for organizational successes and failures. According to these authors, "individuals often attribute causality for success to themselves personally, while blaming failure on external forces that are beyond their control" (p. 448). Jim blames the alums of TATAM for the current problems of the organization. In order to usurp the negative image expressed through the narratives circulated by the alums, Jim "puts on his martyr hat and sings the blues." The members of TATAM claim they have learned to recognize the motivations behind Jim's narrations and they judge content accordingly.

Finally, this project pushes back the boundaries of theory to accept former employees in an analysis of current organizational functioning. Through this research, the need to include interpretive history as an integral part of narrative research was revealed. To ignore an organization's history may be to dismiss the antecedents of current organizational constraints. If the alums of TATAM had not been included in this research, a pivotal analytical link would have been missing and insufficient inferential leaps may have been used as substitutes for first-hand accounts regarding the impact of narrative behavior on the development of TATAM.

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EXPLORING NARRATIVE AGREEMENT: A POTENTIAL SITE FOR CONSTRUCTING HARMONY FROM DIVERSITY

Daniel D. Gross and Stephen L. Coffman

During the harvest of 1994, Montana farmers in several towns along the U.S./Canadian border blocked the entrance of Canadian grain trucks from entering the U.S. Several small northern Montana towns, and Shelby especially, received notoriety regarding the grain embargo.

Montana wheat farmers claimed that Canadian farmers were "dumping" wheat at U.S. grain elevators. Montana farmers claimed that Canadian "dumping" left no room for their wheat in their own area of business, and created long lines at the elevators or forced their trucks to travel to distant elevators. Hank Zell, a Shelby area farmer said, "The Canadian grain is depressing our prices and elevators have so much of their stuff that they don't even need ours" (Kilman, 1994, p. 1). In defense of their acceptance of the Canadian wheat, Marcus Raba, manager of the Peavey Company grain elevator said, "Our mainstay has been Canadian grain since harvest. We're a country elevator in the business of handling grain" (Kilman, 1994, p. 1). Canadian farmers claimed that they were crossing the border to sell their product for the best price.

The actual embargo developed out of Henry Zell's bewilderment over his son's delayed return from a Shelby, Montana elevator. Henry's son tried to deliver a truckload of their wheat and was delayed because he was lined up behind numerous Canadian trucks. As one Montana farmer stated, "So many Canadian wheat trucks were pouring into Shelby that trains couldn't haul out grain fast enough" (Kilman, 1994, p. 1). Hank Zell's wheat sales were needed to pay off several debts. So, he along with other area farmers drove their trucks to the nearby Canadian border and blocked the entrance of Canadian trucks hauling wheat to nearby U.S. elevators. Some locals said that the "farmers must have been pushed too far" (Kilman, 1994, p. 1).

Although the problem was intense for the Montana farmers, an independent trade panel exonerated Canada "because its shipments represent just 4% of total U.S. wheat production of 2.4 billion bushels" (Kilman, 1994, p. 1). Kilman (1994) also stated that even though Canada exported about 100 bushels of wheat to the U.S. during the year ended May 31, six times the level of five years ago, the U.S. exports a huge 1.2 billion bushels annually, about twice as much as Canada.

The six commissioners split on whether grain imports were disrupting the overall U.S. wheat market. But even the skeptics acknowledged problems for farmers in Montana and North Dakota. And some concluded that wheat imports over the past two years had cost U.S. taxpayers $170 million in additional farm payments.

The U.S./Canadian grain embargo was a local phenomenon causing difficulties for farmers living near border towns between Montana and Canada and their respective grain elevator corporations. Because of the localization and the nature of the narrative communication utilized, it presents a unique opportunity to explore the nature of narrative agreement with an international dimension.

While several issues under the rubric of narratology have received attention from rhetorical scholars in the last several years,[1] issues like the nature, function, and application of narrative (Prince, 1982; Ricoeur, 1981; Foss, 1987; Smith, 1990; Katriel & Shengar, 1990), narrative agreement, though heuristically fertile, has been largely ignored (Gross, 1989). However, occasions arise in which humans must find agreement on some empirical product--for example, in a divorce settlement, negotiations between a professor and student over grades, the creation of a political party's platform, negotiations of a labor-management contract, and even in working out international trade relations as in the case of the grain embargo, the case studied in this article. Obviously, there is or may be contractual agreement in these cases; yet, the impact of that contractual agreement on narrative has not been investigated.

The possible effects on narrative could range from no change in either one of the narratives, to a change in both, to total acceptance by both parties of one of the narratives. In the literature on narrative, scholars have offered few suggestions regarding the characteristics of narratives that form during the process of working out an agreement, in fact they are made only in passing while pursuing other research agenda (see for example, Hollihan & Riley, 1987; Mumby, 1987; Fisher, 1987).

This study is an inquiry into the characteristics of rival narratives and how their characteristics may form the basis of an agreement. Our specific research questions are: (1) When conflicts are not resolved, do the disputing party's narratives show significant differences? (2) If so, what characteristics do the narratives have in common, if any? With such information, participants in contention may be able to construct narrative agreement in order to facilitate contractual agreement. Understanding the characteristics of narrative agreement between individuals and even countries struggling with the give and take of ongoing international disputes affords negotiators fertile ground for facilitating collaborative relationships.

METHOD

The primary data used in this study was a myriad of written materials surrounding the United States(U.S.)/Canadian grain embargo incident. Written materials included such items as testimonials, reports, transcribed conversations, newspaper editorials, and materials written by participants from both countries. In the form of a collected manuscript, the material from both the United States (primarily from the state of Montana) and Canadian sources amounted to approximately sixty pages (Gross, 1995).

The data was analyzed via narrative criticism. We began our inquiry by investigating those aspects of the material that constitute basic elements of each narrative--the United States narrative and the Canadian narrative.

We identified in each set the basic characteristics of narrative in two categories: the content--what the story was about--and the form/expression--how the story was told. Within the content aspect, we looked for features of each story concerned with events, characters, setting, temporal relations, causal relations, theme(s), and narrator. We looked at the form/expression of the story by identifying the *means* by which the above elements were communicated. Therefore, our approach involved analysis of both the narrative and how it was told. These elements were used simply as a starting point for our analysis--we did not confine our analysis to these categories and allowed others to emerge from the data (Foss, 1996, pp. 401-406).

Guided by the categories suggested in our data analysis, we constructed from the materials two stories by labeling their specific characteristics concerning form and content. From these two narratives, we ascertained in what way, if any, the two stories were in agreement by comparing and contrasting their characteristics. Any words or phrases in quotation marks in the remaining sections of this paper indicate direct quotes from the data-collection written materials unless otherwise specifically credited (Gross, 1995).

The U.S./Montana Narrative

Narrative criticism of the U.S./Montana narrative revealed five primary characteristics: theme, characters, plot, time, and setting. Focusing on these primary characteristics of the narrative while remaining open to unexpected narrative characteristics, served the heuristic focus of our research and facilitated a comparison of the two narratives. The U.S./Montana farmers used these characteristics to help them tell their story of victimization and decaying "dreams." We have chosen the heading U.S./Montana Narrative because although the story was more broadly based then merely Montana, the majority of the participants were from Montana and the primary narrators were Montana farmers.

Theme. A story's theme or point is that which unites all the other statements of the story. The general theme of the farmers' story was about their quest for "fairness" in the world of wheat sales and marketing. They wanted respect, dignity, and a fair shake in the world of complex agricultural economics. Their objective was to alter people's perception of the wheat farmers' situation and shed some light on the "glaring half truths that reflect unfairly upon U.S. farmers' quarrels with Canadian agricultural policies."

Four sub-themes were used to develop the general theme. First, American farmers have been "denied" access to Canadian markets. Second, the Canadians are "dumping" inferior or "lower" standard grains on the American market. Third, the current rail lines and elevators are unable "to meet local needs" much less accept further produce. Fourth, the grain programs of the two countries are dissimilar. When the land retirement programs and the "monopolistic selling system such as the Canadian Wheat Board" have been adjusted, fairness may develop. In their pursuit of fairness, the farmers confessed that they "will use any means at [their] disposal to assure that [they] can preserve [their] continued existence," because they need "to be able to move [their] grain to market and sell it at a fair price."

Characters. The U.S./Montana farmers' narrative contained five major character groups: the farmers, the grain-elevator personnel, the Canadians, the politicians or government, and the policies.

Several adjectives were used to depict the farmers. They were "heroes." For example, the "shy" Hank Zell became a hometown hero when the "college dropout who had never had much time for farm politics, caught the flu" (Kilman, 1994, p. 1). As the townsfolk stated, "we figured the farmers must have been pushed too far." These are not "hot headed" folks. The farmers are "homespun," "hardworking," "peaceable folks that felt "threatened."

To overcome the sense that their "continued existence" can be "preserved," the farmers became free floating vigilantes. They don't have a membership list, dues or elections. But they can quickly mobilize about half the farmers in the sparsely populated county. A group of 300 staged a rally and barbecue at the nearby Sweetgrass border crossing in late June. Because they spend much of their time in the fields, the farmers stay in contact by cellular phone and facsimile machine. They recruit on trips to town for supplies. "We count on word-of-mouth over coffee," says farmer Marvin Atkins, who recently pigeonholed farmers at an equipment dealer in the town of Dutton (Kilman, 1994, p. 2).

The farmers also feel trapped. A farmer Herb Karst stated, "[It] all adds up to an earthquake . . . a collision of the agricultural polices of the United States and Canada and the farmers are being leveled." Yet, they are savvy and wiser then their "Texas counterparts." The Texans were unsure about the origin of barley and frost-damaged wheat in Amarillo. However, the [Montana farmers] knew there was "[p]robably a pretty good chance it was grown by [their Canadian] neighbors to the north."

Finally, though "shy," "hardworking," "peace loving," and savvy, they also have became unpredictable. As one farmer said, "We never know what we're going to do until we do it . . . and that's worked so far."

The elevator personnel were portrayed as entrepreneurs who only reacted in support of the farmers after the blockade. As one manager said,

> it's a tough call, but our first duty is to our producers . . . . Am I going to handle Canadian grain or am I not? As a businessman, sure, I can see it would make sense to buy some. A lot of producers aren't selling right now, so business is a little slow. But I always have to put my Montana customers first.

Yet, in reality, each elevator is in competition with another. So, they are inclined to accommodate Canadian producers who are, according to one farmer, "eager to sell their grain in the United States for an often-higher price than it would fetch in their own country. Current exchange rates for U.S./Canadian dollars make the prospect particularly lucrative."

Another manager views the situation from a broader perspective when he stated, "But it's pretty simple: We're a grain elevator and our business is to handle grain. It doesn't really make any difference to me whose grain I handle." The United States increasingly is entering the world market and Canadian grain is only a tiny piece of that market. Though Canadian grain may have been attractive, the blockade did cause local grain-elevator personnel to choice sides. Local pressure was strong and there was no room for middle ground.

The Canadians were described ambiguously in the farmers' narrative. At times the Canadians were seen as "good neighbors." As one Montana farmer said, "They recognized the impact of when they send 20, 30 trucks into one community in a day." However, in support one U.S. source stated that the Canadians were using good business sense by taking advantage of an "exchange rate" that "increasingly has favored selling grain" in Montana. One farmer said, "They have to be selling it below market price; why else would Montana elevators be buying it?"

On the other hand, the Canadians were also described as two faced. They have a "monopolistic selling system;" and yet, they cross the border as a sign of free trade while not opening their borders to "free agricultural trade." In addition to the "dumping," Canadian grain allegedly is being "mixed with U.S. grain" which "drops the overall quality of a product that's labeled as grown in the United State." Implied in the mixing allegation is the notion that the Canadians are condoning deception by allowing inferior grain to be mixed with U.S. grain. Finally, Canadians may be "dumping" as a means of "extract[ing] revenge for heavy subsides the United States just began putting behind its wheat exports to Mexico." Though "good neighbors," at times the Canadians displayed poor judgement, as well as opportunistic and revengeful tendencies.

The politicians were depicted as a powerful "force" who had some control over the villain or farm policies. The politicians were President Clinton, Montana Senator Pat Williams, Montana Representative Max Baucus, and Agricultural Secretary Mike Espy. Clinton acted too "slowly" regarding the "unacceptable" behavior of the Canadians. One farmer stated that "if Clinton voted against their recommendation" . . . "it would be a slap in the face of the Democrats."

Other politicians noted that the Canadians had taken "advantage of a situation to the detriment of American producers." Furthermore, they stated that the "dumping" was not "fair" and it is a "crisis." In general, the farmers appealed to the "force" and were heard, though the response was slow and perhaps not in time to circumvent the damage done to the farmers' "crop of '93."

Several farm policies were personified as villains or "culprits"--policies such as Section 22 (a 1933 emergency import policy), the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), and the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). Though NAFTA was lauded by politicians as a cure for unfair international trade, the farmers viewed it as "risky" based on a history of impotent policies and broken "promises." Even the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) which pays farmers to idle land, was viewed as a villain because while the U.S. land is idle CRP allows "Canadian wheat" to be "imported."

If these villains could be removed perhaps "free trade" would bring on "fairness." These policies, therefore, were rendered as past efforts at "fairness" that have now joined together to create a forceful villain against whom the individual farmer is defenseless. The trade agreements do not "live up to their names." In other words, they say one thing and do another. Plot

Plot. The plot of the farmers' narrative was a problem in search of a solution. The problem involved the influx of Canadian grain such that the Montana farmers either were forced into "long lines" while waiting to sell their grain or were unable to sell their grain at all. The solution was two fold. The short term solution was a "blockade." The long term solution was to attract the attention of the "force" or political officials by means of the blockade. The long term solution is still unfolding.

Time. The time of the farmers narrative was not simply within the time frame of the 1993 harvest. Instead, the present embargo is only the present episode going back to trading agreements made in 1933. "Great-grandparents" were part of the early development of the plot with current farmers carrying on the example they inherited. Thus, the farmer's narrative temporal tone was that of a saga or timeless myth.

Setting**.** The setting played an important role in the farmers' narrative. The "plains," "open fields" of grain, and "dusty roads," paint the backdrop. In addition, "small towns" that "support" their own and "join" together in hard times added to the portrait. Finally, to complete the picture of grass roots country living and country folks, folk singers were added. With guitars, original compositions (e.g., a protest song called "The Crop of '93"), and family sing-a-longs, a picture of a classic rural America with a romantic flavor was complete. The setting was that of a land and its people, both standing firm and changeless. A scene in which romantic "dreams" can come true.

In general, the characteristics of the farmers' narrative functioned rhetorically as an appeal for attention and fairness. In other words, the farmers told a saga-story in order to gain the attention of "forces" that could alter their plight. The farmers hoped, thereby, to gain support for their ongoing quest for fairness and respect, and the realization of their economic "dreams."

THE CANADIAN NARRATIVE

Narrative criticism accompanied by our heuristic-comparative research focus revealed three characteristics in the Canadian narrative: theme, tone, and characters.

Theme**.** The theme of the Canadian narrative was a defense for their actions. Thus, it functions like a rebuttal in a debate contest. Stated positively, they "fundamentally believe in open trade." As one Canadian report stated, "[T]he structure of the market is fundamental to the reasons why we seek for more open trade between our two countries." In the support of their theme, they turned to four interrelated postures--good business, the big picture, fault-finding, and positioning.

First, a Canadian source stated, "Montana based elevator companies have been clamoring for Canadian grain." As one source stated, "[I]t has higher protein and is better quality." Second, in the big picture of world trade, the incident in Montana is insignificant. A Canadian paper stated, While a dispute over sales of Canadian grain to northern Montana elevators has made headlines in recent weeks, a closer look shows that grain and other agricultural products are just bit players on the ground stage of U.S./Canada trade.

While farmers have blockaded grain elevators to keep Canadian trucks out, load after load of livestock, wood and paper products and machinery keep on trucking back and forth across the border. Even more is going on underground, where pipelines carrying oil and natural gas account for the biggest chunk of Canadian commodities heading south.

Third, the whole incident is really not the Canadian farmers "fault." Even the International Trade Commission "finds no fault with our trading practices." In fact, it is no one's fault. "[B]oath" sides "can claim some kind of victory" because recent "set-aside" programs have forced Canadian farmers to "cut wheat acreage."

Fourth, the Canadians and U.S. agriculturalists are merely "posturing" for upcoming trade talks. With the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) looming on the horizons, the Americans have one "last kick at the cat for them to get the most they can." In fact even the law, Section 22, that is being used to "keep us out" will be a "dead duck" once GATT is signed. Furthermore, "if making you mad is the best way to get you at the table," then we both win.

Tone. The Canadian narrative featured two styles of narration that combined to create a calculated, objective tone. First, the narrative was communicated in a matter of fact manner. For example, in typical response to a charge of grain blending the Canadians responded with the facts by coolly stating, "That is a novel point." They went on to list the facts about grain exports. "Canadian wheat exports, including, durum, totalled 1,003,000 metric tons." "[E]exports to the U.S, has more than quadrupled . . . since the 1989 U.S.-Canada free Trade Agreement." Therefore, there is nothing different occurring in recent years in that Canadians are merely continuing to increase their grain exports. The U.S. has no "new evidence when it comes to launching an old complaint." If it appears that "dumping" has occurred, the figures do not support the allegations. "Montana is just an attractive market." The Canadian Agriculture Minister Ralph Goodale adds, "Do we have a justifiable position? I have always maintained the Canadian position is very strong."

Second, the Canadian narrative utilized an omniscient point of view. They told their story as if they had an objective advantage. For example, the grain dispute is just "a bit player on the broad stage of U.S. Canada trade." Furthermore, they stated that "they [the American farmers] need to realize it is not an industry issue; it's an international issue." The "imports are symptoms of much broader problems that protesting won't help."

Finally, the Canadians claim that the facts are there for all to examine. They cited findings that an "ongoing international farm subsidy review by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) suggested Canadian and American wheat growers benefit from nearly identical levels of government support." The facts are clear and there for all to use as an objective gauge in determining the legitimacy of the Montana farmers' claims.

Characters. Within the Canadian narrative, two characters were developed though only flatly--the Canadians and the U.S. farmers. The Canadians could not "understand" the reason for the grain blockade in the first place. Yet, besides being dumb-founded by the blockade, the Canadian farmers were "better farmer[s]" who were "smart" enough to know a "good market" for their grain. Not only are they "smart," they are honest, above board, and have "nothing to fear from any investigation of alleged unfair trading practices." Finally, Canadian farmers are sympathetic. They may have all the facts on their side, yet they can "understand how Montana producers feel when grain is congesting their elevators and a local producer can't haul." Our farmers would view it the same way if the situation was reversed," stated one source.

The U.S. farmers, on the other hand, were depicted as "complainers" who "openly" accuse the Canadians of "being crooks." The American agriculturalists "need to educate" their farmers. The U.S. farmers were also portrayed as boring. They "don't have to come up with any new evidence when it comes to launching an old complaint. [They] just keep reappearing." On the positive side, the Canadian narrative did "applaud" the American farmers in their "efforts to focus congressional attention on the grain issue and problems with U.S. farm law." In general, the Canadian defensive narrative functioned rhetorically in three ways. The Canadian narrative provided a calculated rational response that (1) would hopefully leave a positive impression of themselves on the international community; (2) remove any possible blame from themselves; and (3) perhaps re-establish friendly working relationships with the U.S. agricultural community as a prelude to forthcoming trade talks.

DISCUSSION

On occasion, humans who may tell vastly different stories must come to an agreement regarding a particular empirical product such as a trade agreement as in the case of the U.S./Canadian, as yet, unresolved grain embargo. On such occasions, the theory of narrative agreement may offer suggestions for constructing harmony from diversity and thus lead to resolution (Gross, 1989). The following discussion will explore how narrative agreement may contribute to such a construction. The discussion will (1) explore narrative agreement in general by comparing and contracting the two rival narratives and (2) apply the findings regarding narrative agreement to concepts central to conflict negotiation. In each of these sections we will offer hypothesis by way of conclusion and as suggestions for further research.

First, both narratives manifested little narrative agreement; yet, amidst primarily negative portrayals, both narratives preserved some positive regard for the farmers, whether Montanan or Canadian. Perhaps, preserving some positive imaging for the leading characters in the rival narratives is evidence of goodwill, neighborliness, and the desire to communicate. In other words, though the stories are distinctly different, the main characters remain "good neighbors" which is narrative evidence that they will work out their differences. Stated in the form of an hypothesis:

Narrative agreement is likely to be found prior to contractual agreement in the form of good will between the leading characters.

In addition, narrative agreement can be found regarding a common enemy. Both narratives portrayed the U.S. government as somehow responsible for the difficulties. For example, the Montana narrative blames Clinton or expresses distrusts for politicians in general. At the same time the Canadian narrative claims that the Canadians are just playing by the rules, and if the Montanans do not like the rules, then everyone involved should recognize the U.S. Government or their politicians are at fault for making bad deals for the Montana farmer. Thus, both narratives have a common scapegoat and both narratives' farmers can agree on a common enemy. Stated in the form of an hypothesis: *Narrative agreement is likely to be found prior to contractual agreement in the form of a common enemy or scapegoat.* Second, a natural, practical significance exists between narrative agreement and conflict negotiation whether contractual or conversational.

First, an obvious result following an examination of the two narratives is that they evidence little narrative agreement in either form or content. In other words, these are clearly two distinct language communities with different motivations and agendas. This type of situation calls to mind the zero-sum site often visited in conflict. Both U.S. and Canadian farmers perceive that they will win at the other's expense, or lose as the other gains. As Kilmann and Thomas (1975) have suggested, this often appropriately leads to a competitive style of managing conflict. This approach to conflict with its accompanying narratives are taken when decisions or positions must be taken rapidly. The Montana farmers, while long wary of NAFTA, have been rudely awakened by its actualization, and have adopted competition as a defensive posture. Humans also tend to compete when forced into oppressed identities. The Montana farmers certainly perceive that they are a small minority in the face of NAFTA, and do not have the support of their own government. Kilmann and Thomas also note that humans use competition to manage conflict when they perceive that the other side will take advantage of cooperative behavior. The American farmers perceive that the Canadians have taken away markets. Competition is seen as a way of attracting national awareness and support for a new American position.

In addition, and as stated earlier, the stories were polarized regarding most narrative features; yet, they preserved some respect for the leading characters in the rival narratives, the role of being a farmer. Applying this notion to conflict negotiation may have value in the present case as well as similar ones. For example, farmer is a valued ideal in both cultures. It is an overriding image of identity.

Furthermore, while farmers have lost much of their traditional control over that which used to be familiar and concretely obvious, they have not lost control of their own stories which still can be fashioned to re-member their sense of autonomy. One of the anachronistic features of these narratives involves a contradictory script of independence and community. These narratives consist mostly of independent characters, who while they disagree on most issues, remain "good neighbors," or those upon whom one can become dependent in moments of crisis. This appearance of "neighborliness" enables occasional cooperative action and is useful information for conflict negotiation.

NAFTA contractually specifies trade agreement. It does not guarantee commitment to that contract. Ury (1993) suggests that mutual gains negotiation process is built upon the need to listen sympathetically to the other side, define common interests, set common goals and actions, and regularly monitor the effectiveness of cooperative activity. Therefore, if cooperative bridges are to be built between these farming factions, Ury tells us that common interests must be identified and understood. The notion of farmer in the studied narratives may well be one site of commonality for these groups of farmers. Perhaps a needed moment of unity can be achieved based upon the mutually expressed occupational ideal. The idea of "good neighbor" may be another site of commonality. A "neighborly narrative" could be developed from the presented stories which suggests that rural, western farmers need to work together in this time of economic crisis in both Canada and the United States. Stated in the form of an hypothesis: developing and acknowledging narrative similarity may provide the cooperative basis required to negotiate and consummate functional contractual agreements between leading characters.

In the negotiation process, part of the construction of harmony from diversity is first to listen to the diversity. In other words, narrative distinctiveness is the other side of the narrative agreement coin, or without narrative distinctiveness narrative agreement as a tool for conflict negotiation, becomes powerless. First, narrative distinctiveness may be a way for participants to preserve their identity. This remembering and performing identity is a necessary first step in collaborative negotiation. Asserting identity (self interest) and listening to others' performances are essential in developing a "shared consciousness" or, illuminating the commonalities and tensions of distinctive narratives (Putnam et al., 1991.)

In a world in which borders between countries have become increasingly blurred, one viable avenue for inhabitants to preserve their identity is to story their experience. The second author has crossed the Alberta-Montana border over twenty times while serving as a visiting scholar at the University of Lethbridge over a three year period in the early nineties. The narratives told dramatically change at the border in ways suggested in this paper. While trade agreements and international free trade appear to remove borders from afar (Washington and Ottawa), these neighboring farming cultures narrate unique stories to preserve their separate (and superior) cultural identity. Stated in the form of an hypothesis: Narrative distinctiveness, as a counterpart of narrative agreement, serves as a primary means of preserving and reinforcing local cultural identities and is a vital aspect of constructing harmony from diversity in a negotiation process.

Thus, the last two hypothesis suggest a potentially significant role for narrative in developing conflict negotiation. Narrative similarity can be used to identify potential sites for cooperative action and "shared consciousness" during negotiation (Putnam et al., 1991; Ury, 1993.) Working at these sites early in the negotiation process may also facilitate the development of a norm of cooperation, which can subsequently reframe other locations of greater tension (Kochan & Osterman, 1994.)

Future research is suggested by the findings of this study. First, the hypotheses need to be tested on other disagreements to discover if, in fact, they characterize narrative agreement in other situations. A second area of the topic that deserves attention is the sorting out of the causal relations involved in narrative and contractual agreement. Will the narratives maintain their distinctiveness and depiction of "good neighbors" following contractual agreement?

The U.S./Canadian grain conflict remains unresolved. The members hope that "nothing confrontational" occurs "to muddy the waters at this point." Perhaps noting the narrative points of similarity suggested may facilitate negotiations of this and other similar international issues (Barton, 1990, p. 125). In their long history, the farmers of the United States and Canada may be providing a narrative model of communication that can offer a sense of security in a changing world.

NOTE

[1] The study of rhetoric as narrative or story in several scholars' theoretical schemata, including those of Burke (1978), Borman (1972), and Fisher (1987). Others have applied narrative schema to a variety of symbolic experiences. Roye (1986) used narrative to study memory retention, Heming (1987) and Schafer (1981) to analyze psychotherapy techniques, and Alter (1981) as a tool of Biblical interpretation, and Foss (1987) to interpret Memphis furniture. More recently, scholars have demonstrated how narrative plays a vital role in institutional rhetoric (Smith, 1990), in persuasive potency (Carlson, 1989), in testifying to the sincerity of life changing experiences (Griffin, 1990), in conversation (Mandelbaum, 1990), and in exploring tensions between the scientific community and the public in general (Taylor, 1992). Such scholars' efforts have revealed the pervasiveness, practicality, and heuristic value of story to theorist and the critic alike. The pervasiveness and utility of narrative, in fact, has motivated some scholars to claim that narrative is the

essence of human symbolic activity. White (1981) asserted that narrative is a symbolic metacode, while Fisher (1987, p. 2) posited that humans are characteristically *Homo narrans* or storytellers. MacIntyre (1984) and Myerhoff (1978) also claimed that humans are preeminently storytellers and that "story" is both constitutive and constituting of world perceived.

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